

Job hunting 101 for new graduates; usual questions from interviewers listed

QC cops file charges vs PCSO officials, STL franchise holder

Pulse Asia survey says more Pinoys against Cha-cha but their numbers are declining

Future 'Grand Central' station: \$200-M subway to link MRT 3, LRT-1

QC wants seedling bank out to pave way for urban jungle

By DJ Yap and Blanche S. Rivera

ONLY GOD CAN MAKE A TREE BUT MAN CAN build a condominium.

The Manila Seedling Bank Foundation Inc. could be replaced by a high-rise condominium unless the foundation pays P59 million in real estate taxes being demanded by the Quezon City government, according to city treasurer Victor Endriga.

QC WANTS/AB

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BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Wednesday, March 29, 2006

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GOV'T/AB

'Gov't faces jobs deficit of crisis proportions'

EMPLOYMENT DATA RELEASED BY THE GOVERNMENT recently showed an impressive 750,000 jobs created last year but on closer inspection, the numbers hide a serious deterioration in the quality of the country's workforce, according to analysts.

The National Statistics Office's Labor Force Survey also showed that underemployment reached 6.9 million in January, an increase of 1.8 million in the previous 12 months.

Comelec split on Cha-cha

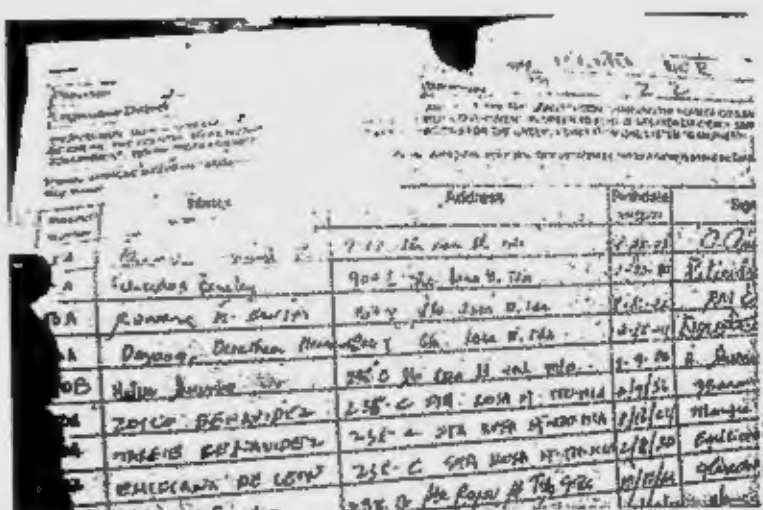
New poll exec, Abalos differ on legality of signature drive

By Jerome Aning and TJ Burgonio

COMMISSION ON Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. yesterday gave local registrars the go-signal to verify the signatures of the people calling for Charter change. But in direct contradiction of his boss, a commissioner said the poll body was barred from entertaining any such people's initiative in the absence of an enabling law.

"We have to harken to the dictates of the [Supreme Court] decision," Commissioner Romeo Brawner, a former presiding justice of the Court of Appeals, said at his confirmation hearing yesterday at the Commission on Appointments (CA). (See story on Page A2.)

In the case Santiago vs Comelec, the high court ruled in March 1997 that Republic Act No. 6735 (or The Initiative and Referendum Act) was inadequate to



SIGNATURES of residents of Barangay 15, Zone 2, District 1, Tondo, signify their approval of the proposed amendments to the 1987 Constitution.

cover a people's initiative to amend the Constitution.

It said the Comelec was "permanently enjoined" from entertaining any such petition until a "sufficient law" had been enacted to implement such a system.

But Abalos said he did not believe his instruction to the registrars would be in violation of the high court's ruling.

"The Supreme Court was very specific. It said the Comelec can take cognizance of a petition for initiative for Charter change only after the petition is filed," he said.

What then would be the Comelec's task while awaiting the formal filing of the petition?

Said Abalos: "Before the petition is filed, the Comelec can only prescribe the form of the petition; issue through its Election Records and Statistics Office a certificate on the total number of registered voters in each legislative district; assist, through its election registrars, in the establishment of signature stations; and verify, through its election registrars, the signatures on the basis of the registry list of voters."

Abalos said the Comelec had a duty to enforce the constitutional requirement that a petition should bear "at least 12 percent of the total number of registered voters."

COMELEC/A20

Court temporarily stops DOJ inquiry into Ultra stampede

By Armand N. Nocum and Margaux C. Ortiz

THE COURT OF APPEALS HAS temporarily barred the Department of Justice from conducting a preliminary investigation into the deadly "Wowowee" stampede for allegedly showing an institutional bias against ABS-CBN, the popular game show's television producer.

In a three-page resolution, the court gave Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez and his prosecutors 10 days to comment on the ABS-CBN petition and set a hearing on April 24. Under the rules of court,

a temporary restraining order (TRO) lasts for 60 days.

The criminal case against ABS-CBN was initiated by the NBI and the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption (VACC) following the Feb. 4 stampede that left 71 people dead and 900 injured.

Charges of reckless imprudence resulting in multiple homicide and multiple physical injuries have been brought against 17 persons, including ABS-CBN officials and personnel. The penalty is imprisonment ranging from six months and one day to 12 years.

ABS-CBN lawyers last week filed the petition seeking to stop

the department from looking into the factual basis for the filing of a criminal complaint against the network's executives, accusing prosecutors of "unseemly haste" in pinning down ABS-CBN for the tragedy.

Lawyer Regis Puno said his clients did not stand a chance of being accorded a fair and impartial inquiry by the department.

The petitioners included accused ABS-CBN officials Ma. Rosario Santos-Cancio, Socorro V. Vidanes, Mariou Almaden, Cipriano Luso, Morly Stewart, Harold James Nieva, Norbert Vi-

COURT TEMPORARILY/A21



SHOULDER TO SHOULDER: An American soldier from the US Joint Special Operations Task Force helps evacuate the wounded after a bomb hit a Catholic-run two-story consumers cooperative in Jolo, Sulu.

Abu blamed for Jolo bombing

By Ed General and Julie Alipala
PDI Mindanao Bureau

JOLO, SULU—AN EXTORTION letter and a mobile phone-detected device indicate that the Abu Sayyaf was behind the bombing of a Church-run cooperative store that left nine people dead and 20 injured, military officials said yesterday.

President Macapagal-Arroyo denounced "in the strongest terms" the attack on the Sulu Consumers Cooperative store in Jolo on Monday and vowed that the military and police would hunt down the perpetrators. She said measures were in place to prevent further attacks.

Ms Arroyo, in a statement, also called for the swift passage of the

long-delayed antiterrorism bill in Congress, which she said would "constrict, contain and control" terrorism more effectively.

"Terror never sleeps and we need to consistently carry out our comprehensive action plan to rid our country and the world of this grave threat," she said.

The provincial civil defense

ABU/A21

Government operating like employment agency

By Jerry E. Esplanada

(Last of three parts)

BLOATED APTLY DESCRIBED THE bureaucracy during the 1980s and 1990s.

"Today, with a workforce of more than 1.4 million, the civilian bureaucracy remains puffed up."

The Civil Service Commission (CSC) has justified the size of the bureaucracy, saying "the problem lies on employee distribution rather than mere totals."

"Compared with more developed economies like Canada, it has opposite figures. (Canada) boasts of 75 percent personnel in Local Government Units or LGUs out of the total, while only 27 per-

cent of Philippine personnel are employed in LGUs. Moreover, geographical distribution shows Metro Manila employing 28.1 percent of total government personnel when 30.4 percent of national government employees are reporting in the region," said the CSC in a 1999 personnel inventory.

But CSC Chair Karina Constantino-David, who joined the constitutional body in 2001, says otherwise.

"The problem with the commission is, more and more, government has operated like an employment agency either because of the nature of politics where you're paying back political debts

GOVERNMENT/A12

Not a dry eye in Guinsaugon on 40th day

By Jani Arnaiz and Connie E. Fernandez
PDI Visayas Bureau

GUINSAUGON, ST. BERNARD, Southern Leyte—Not a drop of rain fell yesterday during the Mass marking the 40th day after a portion of a mountain collapsed and

buried this village of 1,000 people.

There was not a dry eye when Sandy Peligro, 17, recounted before some 1,000 relatives of victims and residents of neighboring barangays how dead bodies, including his mother, were piled like fish inside the barangay hall of Malibago.

Sandy said he was at the nearby San Juan Polytechnic College in San Juan town, where he was studying, when the tragedy struck.

He rushed to St. Bernard, about 5 km away, after receiving word about the landslide that wiped out Guinsaugon on Feb. 17.

"When I reached Guinsaugon, I was shocked to see it gone. I tried to go to our [house] but we were prevented from going there but I saw my sister Jobelyn being rescued," Sandy narrated.

He recalled seeing Jobelyn's face bloodied and broken; he

NOT A DRY/A10



Eradicating poverty a 'utopian dream'

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

TO THINK THAT THIS MAN HEADS THE NATIONAL Anti-Poverty Commission.

Datu Zamzamin Ampatuan, lead convenor of the NAPC, is clueless on the definition of poverty in the country.

He also believes that stamping out poverty is a "utopian dream," and is blaming some Filipinos' abject living standards on their laziness, lack of skills and low IQ.

Declared Ampatuan at a briefing in Malacanang late Monday afternoon: "We all know that poverty will always be there; it is utopian to think that poverty will be eradicated. No matter how good is the anti-poverty program, there will still be elements of poverty."

"No matter how good is the macro perfor-

ERADICATING/A10

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northern Luzon will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers while Eastern and Southern Mindanao will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

COMPILED BY KAREL MENDOZA, FOR RESEARCH/03/29/06 SOURCE: PAGASA

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Second FRONT PAGE

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Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo	Partly Cloudy
Bagyo	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Tayegapao	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Laag	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Partly Cloudy
Tuguey	Partly Cloudy		
Legaspi	Partly Cloudy		
Catagan	Partly Cloudy		

GIs' rape trial moved to Makati

By Armand N. Nocum

THE SUPREME COURT YESTERDAY ORDERED THE TRANSFER to Makati City of the trial of four US Marines accused of raping a 22-year-old Filipina to speed up resolution of the case, which a Philippine-US agreement requires to be completed within a year.

Assistant Court Administrator Ismael Khan said the high court's decision followed a request by Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez and the lawyers of the complainant. The choice of Makati over Manila or Quezon City was based on the caseloads of the courts in these place, Khan added.

The Olongapo City Regional Trial Court postponed the Marines' arraignment last week after Judge Renato Dilag inhibited himself from the case following a complaint that he had failed to disclose his son used to work for a law firm representing one of the Marines.

Gonzalez asked for the transfer of the trial in view of the fact that Olongapo's two other judges could not take the case. In his one-page memorandum, Gonzalez said Judge Reynaldo Caguioa might also inhibit himself

due to conflict of interest, leaving only one other alternative, Judge Avelino Lazo who is retiring in December.

"Considering that under the Visiting Forces Agreement, the judicial proceedings (have) to be completed in a period of one year, it would be dangerous to start the trial of this case and later suspend (it) in the middle of the trial with the retirement of Judge Lazo," Gonzalez said.

Khan said it was up to the Department of Justice to decide whether to let the Olongapo City Prosecutor's Office continue to handle the case, assign the case to prosecutors in Makati or to handle it directly.

Court officials in Makati said they had not received a copy of the Supreme Court's order as of noon yesterday but the case would be

raffled among the Makati Regional Trial Court's 29 branches as soon as the Supreme Court order is received.

A source at the Supreme Court said that in addition to the question of caseload, the justices also considered the matter of aesthetics in transferring the hearing to Makati. The source noted that the courts in Quezon City and in Manila were in dismal physical condition.

The complainant claims she was raped inside a van by Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith on Nov. 1 while the three other Marines cheered him on.

Smith has admitted to "consensual sex" with the woman. The three other men have acknowledged being inside the van with Smith and the woman, but denied any rape took place.

Smith and his co-defendants, Lance Cpl. Keith Silkwood, Lance Cpl. Dominic Duplant and Staff Sgt. Chad Carpenter, belong to the 31st Marine Expeditionary Force stationed in Okinawa, Japan. They face capital charges of rape and conspiracy to commit rape.

They are under the custody of the US Embassy in Manila. **With report from AP**

It's a breeze for Garci's replacement

By TJ Burgonio

THE MAN WHO TOOK OVER FROM VIRGILIO GARCIANO in the Commission on Elections had an easy time of it before the Commission on Appointments yesterday, and no one was a bit surprised.

Unlike his predecessor, Romeo Brawner breezed through his confirmation after he impressed both administration and opposition lawmakers with his integrity and probity.

Members of the CA committee on constitutional commissions, chaired by Sen. Alfredo Lim, heaped glowing praise on the nominee before unanimously recommending his appointment to the CA plenary.

The praises centered on Brawner's handling of the celebrated "Diones massacre" case as a trial court judge in 1993 where he convicted five policemen for the murder of three women and the frustrated murder of another in Benguet.

The four women were caught shoplifting in a bazaar in La Union, hauled off, assaulted and tortured before they were dumped in a ravine in Sablan, Benguet, in June 1992.

"We are in fact emphasizing the character of this nominee, of his courage in the face of insur-

mountable odds to perform a duty... and we expect him to do just that in his next position as commissioner of the Commission on Elections. Am I correct?" Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile said.

"That's correct. And we need people like him in the Comelec, especially nowadays," replied Rep. Marcelino Libanan.

Rep. Aurelio Umali then moved for approval of the 70-year-old Brawner's appointment. Rep. Rodolfo Plaza manifested his support of the confirmation before Enrile seconded the motion.

President Macapagal-Arroyo appointed Brawner to the Comelec in July last year to replace Garcianno, who was bypassed twice by the CA and was not reappointed.

The appointment of Brawner, who retired as Court of Appeals presiding justice, came one month after the "Hello Garci" wiretap scandal purportedly involving the President and Garcianno in a conspiracy to rig the results of the May 2004 presidential elections broke in June 2005.

Brawner was appointed a justice in the Court of Appeals in 1995. In 2003, he chaired the 12th Division of the Court of Appeals which heard the case of the Oakwood mutineers in 2003.

Among the citations he has received are the

Chief Justice Jose P. Laurel Award for Judicial Excellence as Outstanding Regional Trial Court Judge handed out by the Foundation for Judicial Excellence, and the Best Decision Award in Civil Law given by the Chief Justice Fred Ruiz Castro Memorabilia Commission.

Brawner also received a commendation from President Fidel Ramos for his decision on the Diones case.

Brawner himself provided some light moments at the CA hearing when he recounted his "disappointment" with the movie made on the life of Diones, the 17-year-old girl who survived the massacre and lived to tell the tale.

"The Myrna Diones Massacre: God Save Us" starred Kris Aquino as Myrna.

"Of course I had to see the movie and it was the greatest disappointment of my life when I saw the judge depicting my role to be a dumb... without saying anything," Brawner said, eliciting laughter.

Contrary to how he was depicted in the movie, he said he was very assertive and had even rejected motions for postponement of the trial just so the star witness, Diones, who was then in the custody of the police, could wrap up her testimony.

On 37th year, Reds to step up attacks

COMMUNIST GUERRILLAS, marking the 37th anniversary of Asia's longest-running Maoist rebellion, urged their fighters yesterday to step up attacks to hasten the downfall of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"Let us accelerate the momentum of our tactical offensives," the central committee of the underground Communist Party of the Philippines said in a message saluting 37 years of fighting of its armed wing, the New People's Army (NPA).

"We must fight only battles that we can win," the message said. "We must conduct ambushes, raids and arrest operations in which we have the upper hand by concentrating a superior force and taking advantage of the element of surprise."

The government has long accused the NPA of extortion and economic sabotage, and last month, the President announced the rebels had teamed up with right-wing elements in the military in a coup plot she said would've destroyed democracy in the Philippines had it succeeded. **AP**

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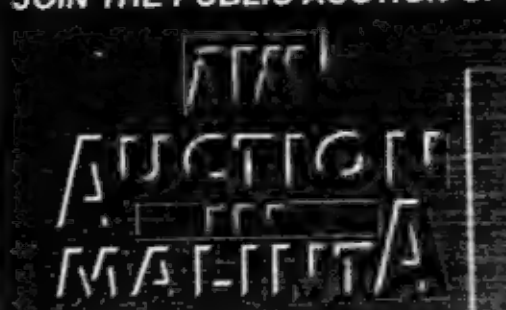
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Palace backing nomination of FPJ as National Artist for film

MALACANANG IS BACKING THE nomination of the late actor and losing presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr. for the National Artist Award for film.

Presidential Chief of Staff

Michael Defensor said: "From the start, the President and her Cabinet has supported the nomination of Fernando Poe Jr. as a National Artist. Even during the elections when this was floated,

she has always been for this."

Mowelfund executive director Boots Anson Roa has nominated Poe among the candidates for National Artist this year for his contribution not only as an actor but also as a di-

rector in numerous Tagalog classics.

"Fernando Poe Jr. deserves the respect and deserves the recognition if and when the NCCA (National Commission for Culture and the Arts) decides that he is the win-

ner. We have to confer him that as an artist and leading stalwart not only in show biz but also in the arts and culture," Defensor said.

Defensor said that Malacañang, however, would not ac-

tively lobby for his nomination in order not to politicize the event.

Despite being a fierce rival in the last elections, Defensor said the President considered Poe a "gentleman." Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.



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Corrections

IN THE MARCH 21 ISSUE, a Metro story on Page A14 — "Electric post topples, hits cruising car in QC" — misstated the plate number of the car that was damaged when an electric post toppled on Commonwealth Avenue, Quezon City. The car's plate number is XKZ 909 — not XKZ 990.

IN LATER EDITIONS OF the March 25 issue, the front-page banner story — "Bernas: They are desperate" — misstated that President Macapagal-Arroyo was seeking to amend the 1973 Charter. The President is seeking amendments to the 1987 Constitution — not the 1973 Charter.

IN THE MARCH 26 ISSUE, a caption of a Page A6 photo accompanying a front-page story — "Museum is living tribute to man truly for others" — misstated the name of the Imus bishop. The bishop's name is Luis Antonio Tagle — not Jose Luis Tagle Sr.

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, China Rocas Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City, fax Nos. 897-47-93/94; e-mail address: daydesk@inquirer.com.ph. Complaints about lack of fairness or objectivity may be sent to Lorna Kalaw Tirol, readers' advocate, e-mail address: readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph or fax Nos. 897-47-93/94, Attn: Readers Advocate. Her phone number is 897-8808 Local 342.



Armed Forces and Police Savings & Loan Association, Inc. (AFPSLAI)

(Authorized by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas)
EDSA cor Col. B. Serrano Rd., Camp Aguinaldo, Q.C.

NOTICE OF 34th ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY MADE that the **Armed Forces and Police Savings and Loan Association, Inc. (AFPSLAI)** will hold its 34th Annual Membership Meeting on 29 April 2006, Saturday at 8:00 AM at the Bulwagang Heneral Arturo T Enrile (AFP Museum and Multi-Purpose Theater), Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City for the purpose of electing the members of the Board of Trustees for the year 2006-2007 and to amend the By-laws and to transact other business.

Registration starts at 7:00 AM and closes at exactly 8:00 AM.

(Sgd.) Atty. Samuel B. Padilla
Corporate Secretary

Survey says more Pinoys buck Cha-cha but numbers declining

FILIPINOS WHO DO NOT CONSIDER it right to amend the Constitution at this time slightly outnumber those who favor amending the document — 48 percent to 43 percent.

A survey conducted nationwide by Pulse Asia Inc. from Feb. 24 to March 18 also found that 63 percent of Filipinos had "little knowledge, almost none or no knowledge at all" of the Constitution.

"Of the 48 percent who deem Charter change inappropriate at present, half (24 percent) oppose it now but are open to it in the future, while the other half (24 percent) do not see the need for Charter change now or at any other time in the future," Ana Maria L. Tabunda, Pulse Asia executive director, said yesterday in a statement.

Pulse Asia noted that the number of Filipinos against Charter change

had declined from 55 percent in March and October 2005.

"Between October 2005 and March 2006, the percentage of those opposing Charter change now drops significantly in Class ABC (minus 18 percentage points) and in Metro Manila (minus 19 percentage points)," Tabunda said.

Conversely, the number of those in favor of Charter change has been growing.

In March 2005, only 29 percent of Filipinos favored immediate amendments to the Constitution. This figure rose to 36 percent in October 2005 and to 43 percent this month, according to Pulse Asia.

"Fewer Filipinos are now for having Charter change sometime in the future instead of immediately (24 percent in March 2006 versus 35 percent in October 2005), while indeci-

sion regarding the timing of Charter change has dropped (from 16 percent to 9 percent between March 2005 and March 2006)," Tabunda said.

Regarding those who hardly knew anything about the 1987 Constitution, Pulse Asia said 28 percent reported knowing enough, while only 6 percent claimed knowing a great deal about the Charter.

"These figures are practically the same as those recorded in March and October 2005," Tabunda said.

These findings must be music to the ears of the proponents of Charter change, including President Macapagal-Arroyo and her supporters.

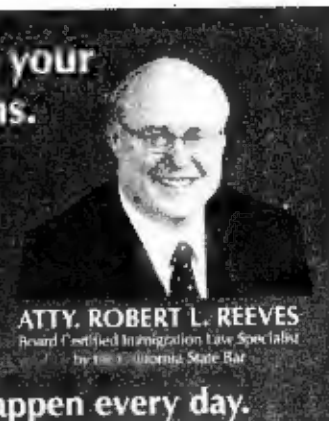
The survey, which covered 1,200 representative adults 18 years old and above, has a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level.

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Court-martial of 29 Magdalo leaders resumes

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan
and Tarra V. Quismundo

AFTER A SIX-MONTH HIATUS, THE COURT-martial of the core leaders of the July 2003 Oakwood mutiny resumes at Camp Aguinaldo today at 9 a.m.

Col. Tristan Kison, Armed Forces Public Information Office chief, said the appointment of a new law member to the court made the resumption possible.

The last hearing of the case against the 29 leaders of the so-called Magdalo group that staged the aborted mutiny was held on Sept. 26, 2005.

Kison said Lt. Col. Edmund Janda had been replaced by Lt. Col. Ann Escartan on the recommendation of the Judge Advocate General's Office (Jago). Janda stepped down as a law member on Sept. 26 after one of the accused made a "peremptory challenge" against him.

Without a law member, the court president, Maj. Gen. Vicente Gueron Jr., suspended the hearing until Janda could be replaced.

Kison could not say why the appointment of a new law member took so long.

A total of 96 Magdalo members, including the 29 core leaders, are being tried before a military tribunal for conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman under Article of War 96 and for conduct prejudicial to good order and military discipline under Article 97 for the takeover of the Oakwood Premier apartment-hotel in Makati City. They were protesting, among other things, corruption in the government, particularly the defense establishment.

The core leaders are also being tried separately on coup d'etat charges in a Makati City court.

Yesterday, however, only 16 of the 26 Magdalo members facing coup charges attended proceedings at the Makati Regional Trial Court, Branch 148.

Two of them, Capt. Segundino Orfiano Jr. and 1st Lt. Billy Pascua of the Philippine Air Force, opted to miss yesterday's proceedings for the first time, adding to the growing number of absentees at every hearing.

"They asked me to come over for a waiver, they did not say why. But maybe it was personal, maybe they wanted to do something else on this day so they executed a written waiver," said Theodore Te, lawyer of the two accused.

Separate trial

Consistently absent from the last four hearings were Navy Lieutenants Antonio Trillanes IV and James Layug and Marine Capt. Gary Alejano, among the core Magdalo leaders.

Five others, Army Captains Milo Maestre-campo, Laurence Louis Somera and Albert Baloloy, 2nd Lt. Kristoffer Bryan Yasay and 1st Lt. Cleo Dongga-As chose not to attend court proceedings for the second time yesterday.

Asked if his clients' absence may be a form of protest, Te said this may well be the case.

"I think that may be part of it, although they are not saying it. It can be tiring in terms of coming here, and they are very restricted ... They are actually detention prisoners, but I would have wished that [there were] dignified ways of treating them," Te told reporters.

Te expressed surprise at yesterday's added security and identification measures for the accused: Each had a green tag pinned to his back with the word "Magdalo" and a three-character code of sorts, such as D-17, printed on it.

Aside from that, they wore the ID cards with the same codes that they had been asked to wear earlier, after the Armed Forces of the Philippines National Capital Region Command (AFP-NCRCom) took over security arrangements for the Magdalo hearings in February.

The NCRCom was ordered to tighten security for the civilian court hearings following the Jan. 17 escape of four mutineers, including three who were on trial in the Makati court.

Of the fugitives, 1st Lt. Lawrence San Juan has been recaptured, while the three others, including two of his co-accused in the coup d'etat case, remained at large.

Those who remain free are Marine Capt. Nicanor Faeldon who escaped after a hearing at the Makati court on Dec. 14, 2005. He was recaptured in the company of military prosecutor Capt. Candelaria Rivas last Jan. 27.

San Juan, Army Capt. Nathaniel Rabonza and 1st Lt. Sonny Sarmiento and Patricio Bumidang Jr. escaped from Fort Bonifacio last Jan. 17.

Job Fiesta at SM Manila

JOBS AWAIT THE NEW GRADUATES OF 2006 and other job seekers with the staging of Job Fiesta, an intercollege job fair, at the fifth floor activity area of SM Manila from March 30 to March 31. Admission is free.

Over 25 companies are represented in Job Fiesta which is being organized by Colegio de San Juan de Letran Batch 1981 as well as Manila Rep. Rudy Bacani and Manila Councilor Mar-jun Isidro Jr. The event is also being held in preparation for Batch '81's hosting of the Letran Grand Alumni Homecoming this November.

Participating companies include St. Mary's Publishing Inc., Metro Inc., Acusys, Convergys, Jobcity.net, Trabaho.com, OFW Ngayon and many more.

Interested parties may call Ruth or Lita at 635-2982 or 667-3286.

INQ7 columnist ordered arrested

By Joel Francis Guinto
INQ7.net

A MANILA COURT HAS ISSUED AN arrest warrant for INQ7.net columnist William "Billy" Esposo over an P11-million libel case filed against him by First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo, the columnist's lawyer said.

In a phone interview yesterday, David Narvasa said Esposo would post bail of P10,000 today.

The charges stemmed from an alleged libelous column by Esposo titled "How to solve a problem like Mike Arroyo," which was posted on INQ7.net on July 5, 2004, Narvasa said.

The First Gentleman lodged the complaint before the Manila Prosecutor's Office last Aug. 2, 2004. It was forwarded to the Manila Regional Trial Court on March 21 this year, Narvasa said.

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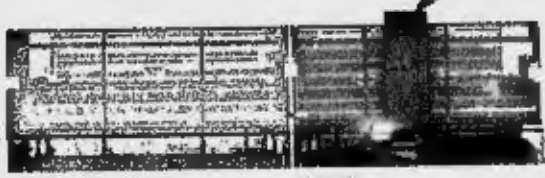
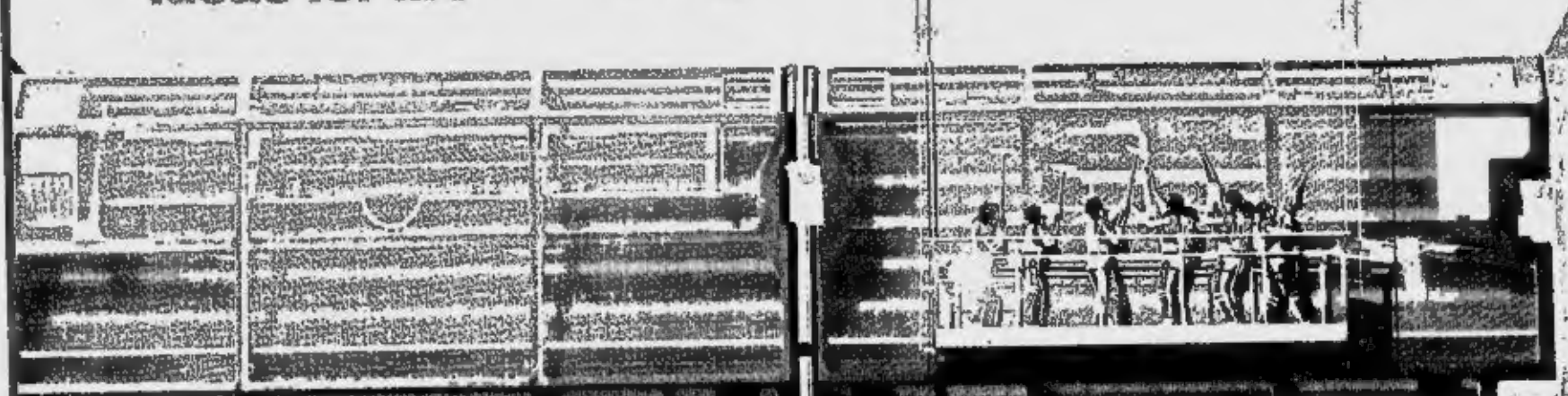
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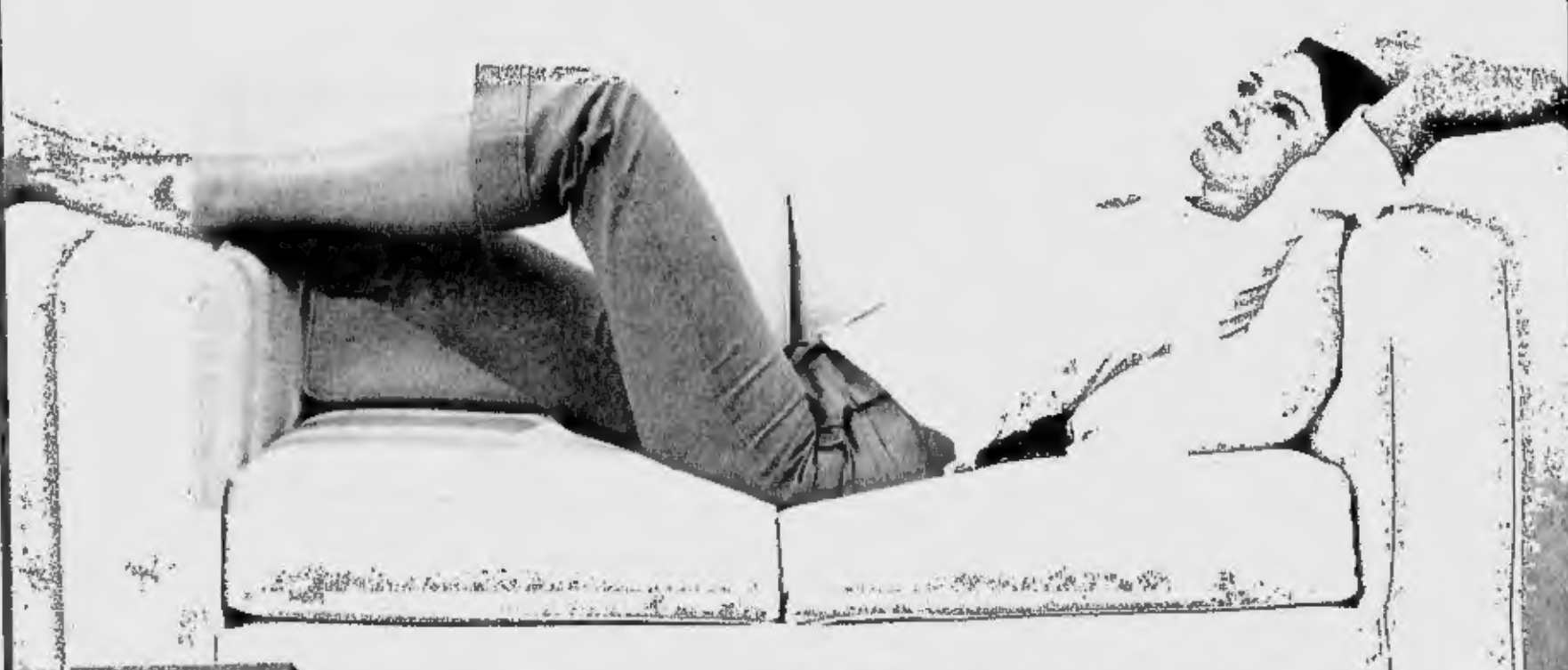
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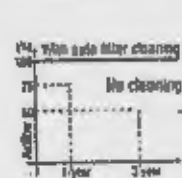
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Tax relief for the poor nears OK

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS committee has formally endorsed for plenary approval the proposed reforms in the individual income tax system aimed at equitably distributing the tax burden among Filipino taxpayers.

In a sponsorship speech yesterday, Tarlac Rep. Jesli Lapus said the much-awaited House Bill 5296 would re-adjust tax brackets to expand the tax base while also increasing personal exemptions and exempting minimum wage earners from paying tax on income.

Lapus said the bill would give tax relief to Filipinos from the low-income groups and "once and for all render equity" to the ranks of salaried Filipinos who bear the entire tax burden for the country.

He pointed out that it was high time that the government "correct such situation while making the individual tax system more equitable and easier to administer thereby encouraging tax compliance."

Lapus said the proposal was a "just and equitable application" of Philippine tax laws and a sensible step to give a break to the working class and low/middle income earners making P400 and below.

Airport cops to probe ceiling collapse

By Nikko Dizon and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

ASIDE FROM CONDUCTING ITS own investigation into the collapse of a ceiling at the mothballed Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 3, the Manila International Airport Authority has asked the Philippine National Police-Aviation Security Group to conduct a separate investigation to dispel rumors of sabotage.

"The Miaa is not saying there was sabotage. We are asking the PNP-ASG to conduct an investigation to rule out speculations that there was sabotage involved," said Florencio Montalbo Jr., Miaa assistant general manager for Naia 3, in a statement.

Some 100 square meters of the ceiling at the arrival area of the terminal fell to the floor early Monday morning, causing yet another delay in the opening of the facility that has lain unused for the last five years.

Miaa general manager Alfonso Cusi has created a committee of Miaa experts to investigate the ceiling collapse.

It would coordinate with a technical group from the Department of Transportation and Communication in the overall management of the terminal.

The incident also prompted Cusi to suspend indefinitely the test run scheduled on Friday,

which would have seen two Cebu Pacific flights to Hong Kong take off from Naia 3 and return to the terminal the same day.

In an interview over dzBB radio, Cusi said the incident "raise(d) doubts on the workmanship (of Naia 3)."

He said the airport terminal would be thoroughly inspected.

"Even if it was expropriated or voluntarily turned over, the warranty or guaranty (of the contractor) that it was built in accordance with the approved plan remains," Cusi said.

The terminal was built by Takenaka Corp., the Japanese company contracted by Naia 3's developer, the Philippine International Air Terminals Co. (Piatco) consortium.

It was Takenaka that reported the ceiling's collapse to the Miaa. Montalbo said the Miaa wrote Takenaka yesterday seeking a formal investigation of the incident.

The airport authority will also hire an "independent company to conduct a separate investigation," Montalbo said.

"As we take note of the general public support for the immediate opening of the new terminal, there is reason to believe that this incident was a blessing in disguise. No persons were hurt and this will afford the Miaa an opportunity to cause, through the contractors concerned, the recti-



CLEAN UP Workers hose down the sidewalk of Terminal 3 of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport in preparation for its soft opening, which was delayed by the collapse of a portion of the terminal's ceiling.

JESSYUSON

fication of all possible defects in the terminal," Cusi added.

To Malacafang officials, the ceiling collapse was also a "blessing in disguise" and a "temporary setback."

"An investigation is ongoing and let us not speculate on the Naia 3 incident which is a temporary setback to our plans," said Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye in a statement.

Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor said the Palace was undaunted by the structural fiasco.

"What happened will not delay the opening of Naia 3. Nothing has

hardly a source of embarrassment for the government since it happened while due diligence was being conducted to test the facility.

He said the blame for any structural defects would have to be assumed by Takenaka.

"The final validation will have to be done in coordination with Takenaka for the guarantees and insurance to kick in. We don't want to lose the guarantees and insurance because we didn't check the facility very well before opening," Defensor said.

Defensor refused to comment on whether the ceiling collapse would have a bearing on the issue of compensation between the government and Piatco, whose contract to build and operate Naia 3 was voided by the Supreme Court.

"We're still not talking of the money or price of the facility because we are still talking about the soundness of the infrastructure," he said. The Supreme Court had ordered to government to reimburse Piatco to the tune of P3 billion after it expropriated the terminal.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita met yesterday with government lawyers and technical experts to assess the problem and to continue making arrangements for the opening of Naia 3 which, according to Bunye, had been set for "within the year."

been delayed because we are doing the validation and inspection anyway where we expect to look for problems, if any, before the opening. This is part of the validation work," Defensor said in a press conference in Malacafang.

When asked if the Palace considered the incident a "blessing in disguise" because it happened before the terminal was opened and not after when many people might have been hurt, Defensor said: "Yes, we can say that. We will not open the airport if there are deficiencies in the construction side."

He said the incident was

Benguet boy tops PNPA graduates

A NATIVE OF LA TRINIDAD, Benguet topped the 2006 graduating class of the Philippine National Police Academy (PNPA), according to the Philippine Public Safety College (PPSC).

The top ten in the Bagsay-Lahi class includes four female cadets.

Margarita R. Cojuangco, PPSC president, said cadet Benjamin D. Balais would receive the Presidential Kampilan Award from President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, the guest of honor and speaker at graduation rites to be held in Camp Mariano Castañeda, Silang, Cavite on March 29.

The 25-year-old cadet is the eldest among the five children of Dimas B. Balais and Nora L. Di-

namling.

Number two in the class is Cadet Lemuel Josef J. Clarete of Upi, Maguindanao. He will receive the Vice Presidential Kampilan Award.

Third is Cadet Stephen George B. Antonio of Tadian, Mountain Province. Antonio, 25, the assistant editor of the PNPA's Kalasag magazine, will receive the Secretary of Interior and Local Government Kampilan Award.

The four female cadets in the top ten awardees are Cadets Neva Renchie I. de Chavez of Calapan City, Oriental Mindoro, Arlene N. Abuan of Calamba City, Laguna; Anabel G. Davocol of Balire, Tunga, Leyte and Grace M. Jamila of Digos, Davao del Sur.

Dimaapi; 79

PAULA GUTIERREZ DIMAAPI, 79, of Makinabang, Baliuag, Bulacan died on Monday in a vehicular accident. She is survived by her children Ricardo, Zenaida, Amelia, Li-

way, Lyn, Roly, Romy and Rod. Her body lies at their residence in Makinabang. Interment will be on April 1 at 2 p.m. at United Memorial Park, Taal, Pulilan, Bulacan.

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, March 29, 2006
4th Week of Lent

1st Reading:

Gospel:

Is 49:8-15
John 5:17-30

Jesus said to the Jews, "My Father goes on working and so do I." And the Jews tried all the harder to kill him, for Jesus not only broke the Sabbath observance, but also made himself equal with God, calling him his own Father.

Jesus said to them, "Truly, I assure you, the Son cannot do anything by himself, but only what he sees the Father do. And whatever he does, the Son also does. The Father loves the Son and shows him everything he does; and he will show him even greater things than these, so that you will be amazed.

As the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so the Son gives life to whom he wills. In the same way the Father judges no one, for he has entrusted all judgment to the Son, and he wants all to honor the Son as they honor the Father. Whoever ignores the Son, ignores as well the Father who sent him.

Truly, I say to you, anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me, has eternal life; and there is no judgment for him because he has passed from death to life. Truly, the hour is coming and has indeed come, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and, on hearing it, will live. For the Father has life in himself and he has given to the Son also to have life in himself. And he has empowered him as well to carry out judgment, for he is a son of man.

Do not be surprised at this: the hour is coming when all those lying in tombs will hear my voice and come out; those who have done good shall rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.

I can do nothing of myself, and I need to hear Another One to judge; and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will, but the will of him who sent me."

Commentary

Isaiah speaks of wonder, of what will come if the people repent: freedom, the favor of God, light, pasture, water; pity, even the earth will make it easier for them to live with grace. All will come from afar and the earth and its people will rejoice in God who never ever forgets us. Jesus speaks lovingly of his Father—the one who does all this and more—who is at work in the world through him now. He does only what he sees God doing! Do we do only what we see Jesus doing in God? What do others see when they watch us? Are we known, like Jesus, as the ones who seek and do the will of the one who sends us out from our baptisms?

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Show's axing a business move – dzRJ

By Alcuin Papa

THE MANAGEMENT OF FM RADIO STATION dzRJ said the axing of a radio show critical to the Arroyo administration was a "business decision" and that there was no pressure from Malacañang.

In a terse statement sent to the INQUIRER, the decision to cancel "Buhay Manggagawa" was a decision "based on our right to reprogram our station when we find it fitting to do so, particularly when we believe that the program's content is no longer constructive."

The station's statement also took a potshot at members of militant groups. DZRJ has always been sympathetic to minority groups that need a voice and has never succumbed to pressure. It has fought presidents in the past. We gave the Leftists P30 million of air time and they repay us by smearing us in the press, it said.

On Monday, the program's host Bernie Ramos, a member of a militant group, told the INQUIRER that "warm relations" between the Jacinto family, owners of dzRJ and the family of President Macapagal-Arroyo was the reason for the show's cancellation.

Ramos also maintained that they tackled issues which were "constructive" not only for a particular sector of society, but for the general public.

"Management said it's their prerogative to cancel programs that are not constructive. So that means issues like wage increases and increases in electrical bills are not constructive for them. But it's constructive for all," Ramos said.

He also said the first wife of Ramon "RJ" Jacinto, who runs the station, is a sister of First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo.

Meanwhile, the militant Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) lambasted the station for canceling Ramos' show, as well as another show "Ngayon Na, Bayan," saying this was proof of government harassment of media.

"This is government harassment plain and simple. Ramon Jacinto, an ally of the President, eagerly sacked the two hard-hitting programs at the mere wish of his patron Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. He and the administration effectively muted two platforms where the basic masses particularly the peasants and workers can air their grievances and postulate their demands," said Danilo Ramos, secretary general of KMP.

Ramos and his group also called dzRJ as "DZ Rotten Journalism."

Gov't printing office slashes costs by half

FROM BEING AN AGENCY MARKED FOR abolition, the National Printing Office (NPO) is becoming a showcase for policy reform and success for the Arroyo administration's campaign against graft and corruption.

This, according to its spokesperson, can now be said of the NPO based on results of the latest biddings it conducted and the reform policies now in place since the new management took over barely a month ago.

NPO spokesperson Sofia Tampoc said that the results of the latest bidding conducted by the agency for carbonless paper, the single biggest item on the NPO annual procurement plan, saw a dramatic cut in prices by 48 percent compared to its previous price.

"The fact that the NPO spent P28 million for carbonless paper alone last year, the results of the last bidding already meant savings worth P12 million for the NPO this year," Tampoc said.

An earlier bidding for White Bristol Board and Manila Golden Kraft, two different types of papers used by the NPO in the printing of accountable and standard forms, also resulted in price reduction by 59.50 and 51.84 percent, respectively.

For these three items alone, the government already saved P12.67 million based on its procurement record last year, unprecedented in the entire 104-year history of the government printing outfit, the NPO press statement said.

The NPO is under the Office of the President through the Office of the Communications Director and the Philippine Information Agency.

A few years ago, then Budget Secretary Emilio Boncodin called for the abolition of the NPO by cutting its budget to scrap bottom and allocating nothing for capital outlay.

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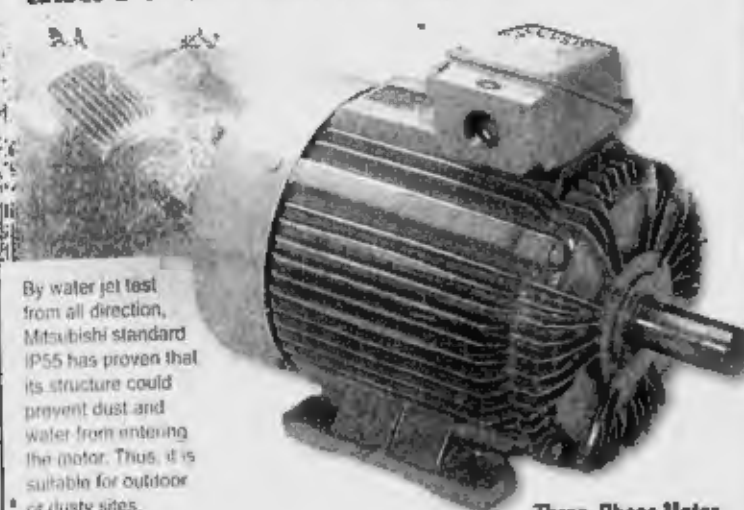
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'Gov't faces jobs deficit ...

From page A1

Clarence Pascual, a senior researcher at the Labor Education and Research Network (LEARN), yesterday said that the jobs created actually fell short of the government's target of generating 1.5 million jobs a year until 2010 so that the unemployment rate could be brought down.

Pascual pointed out that the surge in the number of underemployed persons—those who are seeking additional jobs aside from the ones they already have—that became evident in 2005 was carried over in January.

Pascual explained that if the number of underemployed was added to the 2.8 million jobless (3.9 million if those not actively seeking jobs are included), there would actually be more than 10 million Filipinos, out of a 36-million workforce, who are looking for work.

"This does not include men and women who leave the labor force in the absence of clear job prospects," he said in a statement. "Clearly, the government faces a jobs deficit of crisis proportions."

Rene Ofreneo, director of the School of Labor and Industrial Relations at the University of the Philippines, said the numbers clearly showed that employment in the formal sector was shrinking and employment in the informal sector of the labor market was growing.

"In other words, jobs in those areas of the economy that contribute to economic growth are deteriorating while more and more people are being employed on a part-time basis doing menial jobs in agriculture and household

work," Ofreneo said.

He said around 65 percent of the country's workforce was employed in the informal sector.

In a commentary, the Philippine Business Leaders Forum, part of the Economist Intelligence Unit, said a significant number of jobs had been lost in the construction, health, manufacturing and mining sectors.

Loss in key areas

"These are key areas in asset formation—including social assets as well as fixed assets—and the decline would appear to place the country in further jeopardy," the commentary said.

NSO data showed that the fishing sector lost 5,000 jobs last year, mining 9,000, manufacturing 18,000, health and social work 32,000, and construction 73,000.

The area that saw significant employment growth last year was farming, hunting and forestry where 479,000 jobs were created, followed by private households which contributed 102,000 net new jobs.

"Whether these are salaried jobs or subsistence employment (where people are paid in rice or corn) is not spelled out but we suspect much of it would be the latter," the commentary said.

Part-time jobs growing

The NSO reported that part-time jobs increased by 651,000, which accounted for the bulk of new jobs. Unpaid family workers posted an increase of 389,000 or 52 percent of net job creation while number of own-account workers rose by 263,000.

The Forum commentary said:

"Altogether, these numbers do not suggest to us a picture of robust economic health but rather indicate employment degradation—higher status jobs being lost and replaced by low paying ones—and migration to subsistence employment."

Danny Edralin, chair of the Alliance of Progressive Labor, said the concentration of employment gains in low-productivity and low-pay sectors such as agriculture and private households indicated "poor quality of job creation."

"The government's publicity machinery claimed success in employment generation but deliberately evaded the fact that part-time jobs accounted for the bulk of new jobs created," Edralin said.

"The current jobs crisis has been festering in the last seven years as labor has been left behind in the current growth cycle," he said.

Jobless growth

Unemployment increased along with the growth in the gross domestic product (GDP), according to Pascual.

Government data showed that unemployment rose to 11.8 percent in 2004, easing slightly to 11.3 percent last year. GDP growth accelerated from 3.3 percent in 1999 to 6.1 percent in 2004 but decelerated to 5.1 percent in 2005.

"The flip side of rising unemployment and GDP growth is improving labor productivity. Indeed, labor productivity has been rising since the mid 1990s in contrast to the trend in the 1980s and early 1990s," Pascual said.

Edralin lamented that the ris-

ing labor productivity did not translate into higher wages and family incomes because of soaring unemployment.

Family income shrinks

The overall index of compensation in establishments with 10 or more workers has been flat over the last 10 years, he said. The index for the manufacturing sector shows a steep drop during the same period.

The latest data also showed that the average family income in real terms shrank 14 percent between 1997 and 2003 despite the steady rise in productivity.

"Labor is condemned to lurch from one crisis to the next," said Edralin.

Mission critical jobs

Ofreneo said the loss of "mission critical" jobs was becoming serious in many sectors of the country's economy.

"A lot has been said and written about the loss of health professionals in this country," he said.

"Now, we are starting to hear about the impact the loss of pilots, in particular captains, and engineers from the aviation sector."

The president of Philippine Airlines, Jaime Bautista, warned the company's \$1-billion, six-year expansion plan could be cut back if the airline failed to halt the exodus of pilots.

Some 140 senior pilots and over 1,900 aircraft mechanics have left for higher paying jobs overseas in the last five years.

From 2003 until the end of February this year, PAL lost 78 of its senior pilots to foreign competitors. Reports from AFP and Jerome Aning

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LUSH FAÇADE of the Manila Seedling Bank provides the clean and green lungs in the middle of the polluted concrete jungle.

QC wants seedling bank out ...

From page A1

"This is plain harassment. They want this corner for the commercial malls, with the intention to create a concrete jungle at the expense of ecology and the environment," Manila Seedling Bank president Lucito Bertol told the INQUIRER in an interview.

He said the foundation was exempted from all forms of taxation, duties and imposts by Proclamation No. 1197, issued by former President Ferdinand Marcos on Sept. 7, 1977. Half a million seedlings could become homeless once the foundation is ordered to vacate its 7-hectare office cum garden on the corner of Edsa and Quezon Avenue.

The city treasurer had auctioned off the prime property in December last year, after serving a final note on delinquency to the foundation for failing to pay its property taxes from 1978 to 2005.

Since no one made a bid, the city stands to assume ownership of the property, unless the Manila Seedling Bank manages to pay its dues, including interest and fines, before a mandatory one-year redemption period.

The redemption period lapses in December. Should the foundation fail to settle its obligations until then, the city automatically acquires the property, Endriga said.

No notice for taxation

According to Bertol, the Manila Seedling Bank has not received any notice for taxation the past 28 years, until Endriga served a statement in October 2005, saying the foundation had failed to pay real property taxes from 1978 to 2005 totaling P59 million.

"We have never been charged any real property [taxes]. This is the first time Quezon City has tried to collect

from us," Bertol said.

Endriga dismissed Presidential Decree No. 1197 exempting the foundation from tax duties, saying it had been nullified by more recent laws, among them the Local Government Code, that declares any commercial-use property taxable.

He said the Manila Seedling Bank—which had been propagating and giving free seedlings for reforestation for almost three decades—was considered commercial, since it leased out the property to tenants, such as a florist's shop.

Endriga added that the property was actually owned by the National Housing Authority, with which the foundation is entangled with in an ownership squabble that has been brought to court.

He said the city had been serving its tax notices to the NHA for the longest time, but no one had been paying the taxes. It was only recently that the city treasurer's office undertook measures to recover the unsettled obligations.

Henry Sy interested

According to Endriga, many developers are "very interested" in the prime property, particularly Henry Sy, who has signified his intention to bid for it.

Already, plans are afoot to convert the area into a commercial complex, with a high-rise condominium and parks, as part of the city's "Central Business District" project.

"Putting up a mall is not among the initial plans since it might compete with SM City North Edsa (which Sy also owns)," Endriga said.

The CBD spans the North and East Triangles that are bounded by East Avenue, Edsa, North Avenue and Elliptical Road, including the Veterans Memorial Hospital.

If plans push through, and the city secures a presidential proclamation

declaring the area a business hub, the city will open to developers several hectares of prime property, which will be infused with as much as P1 billion capital for development.

No green spot

"[This will] spell the demise of that green spot right in the heart of the metropolis that acts as a giant sponge in purifying the polluted atmosphere in the area," the Manila Seedling Bank said in a statement.

The foundation helped in the reforestation of the La Mesa Dam Watershed, Marikina Watershed, Meralco Jala-jala project, Mt. Samat Agro forestry project, Philippine Nuclear Power Plant project, Bataan Industrial Tree Plantation and the Mountain Resort in Baras, Rizal.

Endriga said the development of the Manila Seedling Bank property was by no means final. There was still the slim possibility that the foundation would pay up, he said.

In fact, the seedling bank was identified as one of the "challenges" to the development of the area, according to a primer on the CBD obtained by the INQUIRER.

Talk to the President

Other possible stumbling blocks include the large number of informal settlers and a standing contract between NHA and New San Jose Builders Inc. and Robinson's Land, for the lease development of a 37-ha property near the MRT depot.

The city is already in talks with the NHA for a possible joint management of the CBD, Endriga said.

Mayor Feliciano Belmonte Jr., on the other hand, is on the verge of bringing the matter of the CBD President Macapagal-Arroyo, he said.

"Considering that the President is preoccupied, we need proper timing [for the proposal]," Endriga said.

PETA wins special prize from Japan Foundation

THE PHILIPPINE EDUCATIONAL Theater Association recently received the Japan Foundation Special Prize for Culture and Arts, the first time that a Philippine organization or individual was so awarded by the 33-year-old Japanese non-profit cultural organization.

PETA was cited for "carrying out educational and community-building efforts through its theatrical productions" and undertaking "collaborative initiatives with artistic and civic groups in Japan and many other Asian countries."

The foundation also cited the theater group for having played "a key role in the formation of an Asian art network."

The award came with a P1 million monetary gift which Peta said it would use to complete the

building of its Theater Center.

The group has just built a Theater Center and School with the support of local and foreign funders, particularly the Inter-Church Organization for Development Cooperation (ICOC) of the Netherlands which undertook the funding of a major part of the project.

Since 1979, Peta has been working with many Japanese organizations and individuals, starting with the Kuro Tendo or Black Tent Theater (BT), through a regular exchange of artists and co-productions.

Peta has also developed lasting and meaningful ties with individual Japanese artists, educators, advocates, students and community folk. Regular exchanges continue to this day with the annual Asian Peoples Theater Workshop that began 10 years ago.



EMPEROR'S HAND. Cecilia B. Garrucho, president of the Philippine Educational Theater Association (PETA), receives the congratulations of Japan's Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko on behalf of PETA, which won the Special Prize for Culture and Arts given by the Japan Foundation.

Quake hits but causes no damage

A STRONG EARTHQUAKE shook the central Philippines early yesterday, but there were no immediate reports of damage or injuries, the government's earthquake monitoring agency said.

The magnitude 5.1 tremor occurred at 7:43 a.m. and was centered undersea, 45 kilometers off San Jose town in Mindoro Occidental province.

Seismologist Ric Mangao of the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology said the epicenter was 21 kilometers (13 miles) below the earth's surface, relatively shallow but not powerful enough to cause a tsunami.

He said the tremor, which was felt at the popular resort island of Boracay, was caused by the colli-

sion of two fault lines. Some aftershocks were expected, he added.

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Eradicating poverty a 'utopian dream,' says antipoverty exec

From page A1

mance [of the economy], a lot of our countrymen will continue to be poor. We have to appreciate that we cannot totally eradicate poverty. We cannot eradicate it, but we can manage it."

To prove his contention that the total eradication of poverty is a pipe dream, Ampatuan cited the existence of poverty in the United States as well as in other developed countries in Asia and Europe.

It appears to be common practice among administration officials.

In January, Augusto Santos, director general of the National Economic and Development Authority, said the "poorest of the poor" were not easy to find in Metro Manila.

"All modern cities in the world have pockets of poverty within them, and that's not easy to locate. Even in rural areas, it's hard to say if a family is going hungry just by looking at their house," Santos said.

Bright and not

Ampatuan, who belongs to a politically influential family in Maguindanao, attributed the futility of fighting poverty to the poor themselves.

"Our people have different levels of skills. Some are industrious, some are lazy; some are bright, some are not too bright; some have advanced skills, some have poor skills," he said.

Let's be realistic

Ampatuan added: "It doesn't mean the Filipino is lazy, but there is truth to that. There is reality that some people cannot get out of it because of their own personal account. Let's be realistic about it. Look at your neighbors and how they conduct their lives, and how another neighbor can be

productive with just P500."

But he pointed out that being poor should not be taken "negatively" because even "the Bible praises being poor, and it even calls the poor 'children of God.'"

'Proprosperity'

Ampatuan would rather call the government's antipoverty program a "prosprosperity" program because, he said, these projects were aimed at preventing more Filipinos from falling below the poverty line.

As many as 21 million Filipinos live below the poverty line, per the NAPC estimate.

Ampatuan said at least half of the P35-billion fund for pump-priming (or P17.5 billion) had been set aside for antipoverty programs, meaning the government would spend P833 a year (or a little over P2 a day) for each poor Filipino.

He said the government preferred strategic intervention—or helping the poor indirectly through social services projects and food subsidies—over giving money directly to them because it would have "a very negative implication in terms of values" and promote mendacity.

'I forgot'

When asked about the threshold level or the daily spending of a poor Filipino, Ampatuan was clueless.

"I hope I have that data. I forgot the threshold," said the man whom President Macapagal-Arroyo named to the post eight months ago.

His staff had to scramble for a computer to get at the poverty threshold, which has been set at \$1 a day.

In January, Santos said the NEDA was getting inputs from the NAPC to ensure that its list of indigents was "credible."

THE LAST TWO HUTS standing are only a few meters away from the mudslide that buried Guinsaugon.



Not a dry eye in Guinsaugon on 40th day

From page A1

thought she would not survive but she did.

Sandy said that when he failed to find his mother at the landslide area, he went to Barangay Malibago because he was told this was where the retrieved bodies were brought.

Like fish

"I really broke down when I saw the naked bodies, including my mother, lying on the cold cement floor. I was torn to pieces," he said.

"Guinsa man ni ninyo akong nanay ug tanang patay, mora man ug mga isda sa tiangge gipanglaray. Daghan kaayong mga tawo nagtan-aw morag mopalit ug isda. Wala man gani salipdi bisag panapton (What have you done to my mother and all the fatalities? They are like fishes in the market, being lined up. The many people were looking at them as if they were going to buy fish. They were not even covered by a piece of cloth)," said Sandy, amid sobs.

St. Bernard Mayor Maria Lim, who was also crying, apologized to Sandy and to the other relatives of the landslide victims.

"I'm very, very sorry. The tragedy was so huge, we didn't know what to do. I, for one, admit that I didn't know what to do," Lim said.

Moving on

Ten students from Guinsaugon, who were studying in Cebu when the tragedy hap-



GATEWAY TO GUINSAUGON was lined with children looking on at a procession of rescuers and Good Samaritans who descended upon this barangay in a remote Southern Leyte town. EDWIN BACAS/AS

pened, offered flowers at the cross, which was put up as a memorial two weeks after the tragedy.

Four of them, who graduated this month, offered their graduation hats by placing them at the foot of the cross.

In his homily, Maasin Bishop Precioso Cantillas asked the relatives to pray and to move

on because their loved ones were already in heaven.

"I urge you to pray for their sacrifices. Like Jesus, who sacrificed [His life] for us," said Cantillas.

Boy, 5, electrocuted

Danger, however, still lurks in the disaster area.

In Barangay Hinabian, 5-year-old Jodel Telen was killed and his older brother Jonathan was injured on Friday when they washed their feet in a stream, not knowing that a live wire was in the water.

Jodel was buried at the Barangay Catmon Cemetery on Saturday morning while Jonathan, 17, was recuperating at the district hospital in nearby Anahawan town.

The boys' parents and six other siblings had been staying at the Barangay Catmon Elementary School since killer landslides wiped out neighboring Barangay Guinsaugon on Feb. 17.

The Telens were among the evacuees from Barangay Hinabian after their village was declared among the disaster-prone areas in St. Bernard.

Their turn to cook

According to their neighbor Carpo Natonio, Jodel, Jonathan and their father, Mario, left the evacuation center for Hinabian in the afternoon of March 24.

The two boys went to gather firewood because it was their turn to cook, while Mario wanted to graze the cow.

Mario stayed behind and told his sons to head back to the evacuation center, said Natonio.

On their way back to Catmon, Natonio said the two passed by a stream to wash their feet, not knowing that a live wire from a mini-hydro electric power was in the water.

Burned fingers

Jodel was the first to dip his foot and received an electric shock. Jonathan tried to pull his brother out of the water but was thrown off by the tremendous electric shock.

Bro. Hansel Mapayo, one of the religious volunteers at the evacuation center, said Jonathan had been under observation by the physicians although he remained weak and suffered burns in his fingertips.

Check live wires

Upon hearing of the news, Gov. Rosette Leras ordered the Southern Leyte Electric Cooperative to check their electric lines in barangays declared disaster areas, as well as in evacuation centers to avoid similar incidents.

Mapayo expressed his sadness, saying the incident could have been avoided if the evacuees had not returned to their villages since these areas had not been declared safe.

Still, some went back during the day either to tend to their farms or to graze their farm animals and returned to the evacuation center in the afternoon.

Those staying at the Catmon Elementary School were evacuees, mostly farmers, from Barangays Magatas and Hinabian that had been declared disaster areas following the landslides at Guinsaugon.

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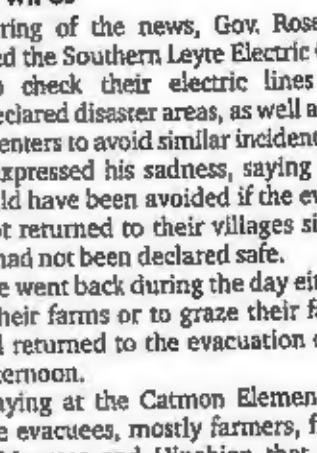
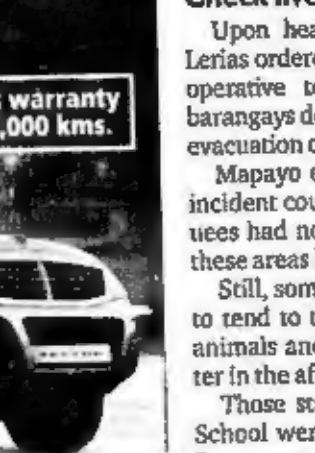
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BIR files P78-M tax case vs accused smuggler, sis

By Armand N. Mui

THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE yesterday filed another tax-evasion case against suspected smuggler Samuel Lee and his sister Thelma for allegedly understating almost a billion pesos worth of imports in 2001 and 2002 to evade the payment of P78.4 million in taxes.

At the same time, prosecutors at the Department of Justice said they would be meeting with BIR officials to expedite the resolution of the four tax-evasion cases against Lee that were filed last year.

In the latest case against Lee, operatives of the BIR's Run After Tax Evasion (RATE) program said Lee and his sister, who are president and vice president, respectively, of Manila Home Textile Inc. (MHI), had declared purchases of P3.4 million in 2001 and P976,123 in 2002.

Lee were signatories of the tax return forms.

In a recent Senate hearing, the names of Lee, Lucio Lao Co and Vicky Toh surfaced as among the country's allegedly big-time smugglers with purported links to First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo.

Last year, the BIR filed tax evasion cases against Lee's alleged dummy firms—Columbia Sports Phil., Nitoka Industrial Corp., Mirsuko Phil. Corp. and the Pine River International Corp.

In October 2005, however, senior state prosecutor Edwin S. Dayog dismissed the P151-million case against Columbia, saying those charged "were not the responsible officers."

The BIR asked the DOJ to reconsider its decision on the Columbia case amid reports of a P10-million bribe being paid to the justice department. Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez and Dayog

have denied the payola allegation.

"I have not seen even a centavo from that supposed payola," Gonzalez said. He denied knowing Lee or that anyone from Malacanang had called him to intercede in Lee's case.

Lee was arrested in early March and charged with smuggling and for corrupting a public official after he allegedly attempted to bribe the arresting officers.

The case caused an uproar after a Quezon City prosecutor ordered the release of Lee. The prosecutor amended the release order after the arresting police officers complained and filed charges against Lee who is now out on bail.

In a telephone interview, Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuñiga said he and DOJ prosecutors would meet with the BIR to expedite the resolution of all cases against Lee.

Perjury, too

But a check with the BIR's audit information, tax exemption and incentives division showed that the firm had made imports of PVC materials, woven fabrics and PVC leather, among others, amounting to P431.1 million and P555.7 million in 2001 and 2002, respectively.

"Initial findings disclosed that MHI willfully and deliberately understated the amount of its purchases and importations," the BIR said in the tax complaint it filed at the DOJ yesterday.

The under-declaration of the business transactions by the MHI resulted in tax deficiencies of P43.7 million and P34.6 million in 2001 and 2002, respectively, or a total of P78.4 million, the BIR said.

MHI, which has been in operation since 1977, is engaged in the manufacturing, buying, selling, importing and exporting of textiles, supplies, tools, machines, appliances and equipment.

Apart from the charge of tax evasion, the BIR also slapped the Lee siblings with perjury charges for "willfully filing" the MHI's income tax returns in 2001 and 2002 "containing false information regarding its sale, income and purchases." The BIR said Samuel and Thelma

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Gov't operating like an employment agency

From page A1

of the nature of politics where you're paying back political debts or kawawa naman. Yung mga anak 'wag na nating tanggahin," David said.

That is why, David said, "inefficiency has never been checked. Why? Because the Constitution provides for security of tenure."

But "security of tenure is not the problem. The problem is—there's no clear monitoring of performance," David said.

Today, government remains the nation's biggest employer, claiming more than 60 percent of the national budget for salaries alone," pointed out former Sen. Francisco Tatad in his book "A Nation on Fire."

"Even (US computer giant) Microsoft would have long gone under if it spent this much on personnel," Tatad wrote.

The opposition stalwart noted that "almost every business firm has been forced to retrench, but government continues to grow in the opposite direction—without any corresponding growth in quality of its service or personnel."

When interviewed last November, David acknowledged that the commission had yet to come up with an updated and official count of state workers.

The 1.4 million-plus total is "as good as we can guess," David told the INQUIRER.

Ghost employees

The CSC estimate did not include, for obvious reasons, a still undetermined number of "ghost employees" in various national and local government offices nationwide.

In the absence of a data base, the commission has not looked into the irregular practice and the resulting government losses, financial or otherwise.

One hundred five years after the country's civil service was formally established, the ideal size of the bureaucracy has yet to be set.

David said "the ideal size is not something that anybody can say. First, because there are agencies that are understaffed and there are agencies that are over-staffed."

Tatad, who served as information minister during the martial law years, said Filipinos "need a smaller, leaner, but more efficient and effective government whose standards of performance and pay are comparable with those of the private sector."

"Government must not try to do what the private sector can do at lower costs and better. We must privatize every office or function that can be privatized, and professionalize every office or activity that government chooses to retain."

The state, the ex-senator asserted, "must not employ more people or spend more money or time than the private sector would otherwise hire or spend on a particular office, project or program."

"The bureaucracy must be isolated from politics to ensure the continuity of programs, while maintaining the highest levels of professionalism and patriotism. Every President is free to appoint his Cabinet and key political advisers. But the bureaucracy as such should not be treated as political plum by every incoming administration. It should be answerable only to civil service laws and not to the caprices of every new set of power-holders. This is the only way to build a strong bureaucracy and a highly competitive private sector," Tatad said.

Contract

The CSC, which has quasi-judicial powers, is bent on professionalizing the bureaucracy, but there are times the executive department unreasonably blocks its efforts.

Like in 2002 when the commission and the budget and finance departments banded together and came up with a scheme

aimed at professionalizing further the civil service.

David recalled forwarding to Malacañang what she called a "contract" requiring all presidential appointees to government-owned and -controlled corporations (GOCCs) to be career service eligibles.

The plan, a brainchild of David and then Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodon, supposedly covered all executive branch managers from the rank of director 1 to under-secretary.

However, after more than three years, Malacañang has not decided on the so-called contract.

David is appalled at the inaction, seen by some CSC insiders as another example of the administration's outrageous inefficiency.

Despite the lakedown, the CSC has not lost its grip on the campaign to professionalize the civil service.

The executive department had asked the commission to give priority to the lower levels in its ongoing program.

Three levels

Wrong strategy, David said, asserting that for the CSC campaign to succeed all three levels should be equally and adequately covered.

In the civilian bureaucracy, the "first level" groups clerical, trades, crafts and custodial service positions.

Professional, technical and scientific positions belong to the "second level."

The "third level" refers to the career executive service or managerial positions. A little over 40 percent of the 6,000-plus third level posts are still held by "noneligibles."

It is an entirely different story in the first and second levels where "eligibles" hold at least 80 percent of positions.

The commission has acknowledged that its professionalization efforts "have not reached far in

the noncareer service category as political patronage persists as a stumbling block."

"This was most evident in local government units, which employed more than 118,000 or 60.6 percent of the total number of noncareer employees nationwide. A large contingent of the LGU workforce were either casuals or contractuals at over 94,000 or 80.1 percent. Presumably, these were political protégés who did not meet the qualification standards prescribed by the CSC for the regular positions."

Merit and fitness

The CSC has reported that "because of continuing efforts to professionalize the bureaucracy, career employees far outnumbered noncareer personnel."

"This translated to a total of more than 1.25 million (86.5 percent) being employed on the basis of merit and fitness, thereby enjoying security of tenure. In contrast, 13.5 percent or over 194,000 were employed based on factors other than the usual test of merit and fitness," the CSC said.

In the 1999 study, the commission said the bureaucracy had achieved a high degree of professionalization considering the high percentages of permanent and career service employees.

"This means the prescribed standards for positions particularly in the first and second levels are met by the incumbents. However, it is saddening to note that in the managerial echelon, more than half of occupied career executive positions are held by noneligibles."

It would have been more motivating for the rank and file to perform under the helm of people who likewise have met their respective qualification standards," the CSC said.

Women

Other CSC inventory findings:

• Women accounted for 53 percent of the bureaucracy, especially in Regions 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 11.

Men outnumbered the females in Metro Manila, Region 12 and the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

It was in national government agencies that the presence of women was strongly felt (59 percent). But they accounted for just 33 percent of the workforce in GOCCs and 42 percent in LGUs.

The Muslim culture, prevalent in at least two regions in Mindanao, continued to manifest reservations in allowing women to engage in work, thus the preference for men.

Leadership, direction and control were strongly held by men. The fact remains that in the bureaucracy, executive and managerial positions are their domain.

Disparity

The disparity "might be worked out with the issuance of CSC Memorandum Circular No. 8, which seeks to promote gender equality at all levels in the civil service, more specifically in third level positions."

• A majority of state personnel belonged to the 36 to 40 age group, but their median age was 41.

This implied that at most, they have 24 more years to serve the government before retirement and will benefit from training and other human resource development interventions given them.

• At least 77 percent of government personnel were married. Seemingly, more married workers pursued government service because it connotes stability.

• On the average, a government employee stays in the service for at least 16 years, meaning many of them were recruited during the last years of the Marcos regime and the Aquino administration.

tration.

• The bureaucracy was predominantly run by Roman Catholics who numbered more than 1.16 million.

All other religions like Protestants, Islam, Iglesia ni Cristo and Born-Again groups were mealy represented.

Public school teachers

Public school teachers, at more than 30 percent of the entire workforce, have remained the largest occupational group in the civil service.

The CSC said "the education sector, which always ranked high in the government's priority list, cannot be sacrificed to operate with a limited workforce."

"Thus, despite the prevailing economic difficulties, they (teachers) were a perennial exemption from any streamlining policy, which prohibits filling up positions or hiring. Consequently, their count continuously increased," the commission said.

Female teachers reigned supreme in numbers at more than 80 percent of the total teaching positions.

Many of these teachers were between 51 and 55 years old but those in their 30s were not far behind.

Like the teachers, the hiring of Philippine National Police personnel was never stopped despite the stingy government budget. There are more than 115,000 PNP members.

In her 10-point agenda, President Macapagal-Arroyo vowed to streamline the civilian bureaucracy to make government services more efficient.

However, it is not clear how far government will go in trimming down bureaucracy's excess fat.

What's clear is that ordinary employees, not political appointees holding managerial positions, will bear the brunt of the next streamlining program.

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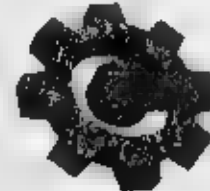


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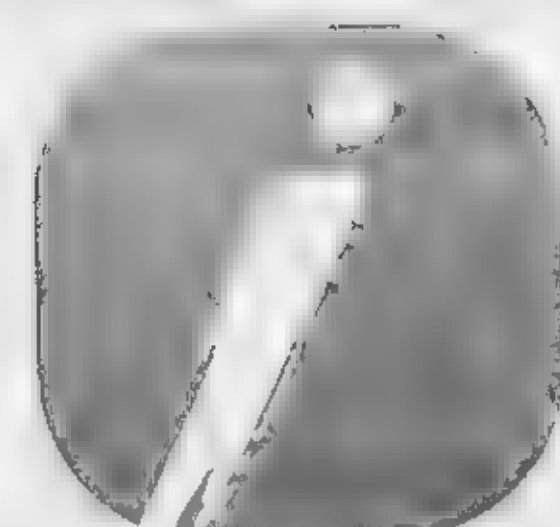
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Mercury in Sorsogon bay a hoax, says 2nd UP study

A SECOND TEST BY UNIVERSITY OF THE Philippines scientists had validated earlier findings that Sorsogon and Rapu-Rapu Island in Albay are safe from mercury contamination.

The UP-Natural Sciences Research Institute (UP-NSRI) study dated March 24 and made public by Sorsogon Gov. Raul Lee late last week tested water sediment samples. The first UP-NSRI study, issued earlier this month, tested surface water and fish samples.

These two studies, according to Lafayette Philippines in a press statement, confirmed the five earlier tests done by the Bureau of

Fisheries and Aquatic Resources all showing that the mercury contamination in Sorsogon, as claimed by anti-mining groups and blamed on Lafayette's Rapu Rapu project, never existed.

The hoax, however, hurt Sorsogon's own fishermen as people stopped buying fish, Lafayette said. Lee, Albay Gov. Fernando Gonzalez and other Church and local politicians have mounted a campaign to inform their constituents that it is safe to eat locally caught fish.

The Sangguniang Panlalawigan of Albay, led by Vice Gov. James Calisia, had also asked the National Bureau of

Investigation to identify the people who submitted contaminated fish samples to BFAR.

BFAR's adverse findings on these fish samples were eventually used to fan the hoax. But BFAR had said these findings were not scientifically reliable since it was only those who submitted the fish who knew where, when and how the samples were taken.

The company had said it could not have caused any mercury problem since it does not use mercury in its operations and Rapu Rapu, where it operates, has no mercury problem at all. Rapu Rapu is across the sea from Sorsogon.

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OPINION

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The rational choice

WHAT WOULD IT REQUIRE FOR THE ADMINISTRATION to obtain constitutional change by means of a people's initiative (ironically an effort made possible not by the people but by politicians)?

Three legal somersaults would be needed. The first entails the application of a law which the Supreme Court has declared unconstitutional, at least with respect to the provisions governing people's initiative and the Commission of Elections has been "permanently enjoined" not even to consider. The second requires overturning generations of constitutional law by upholding the exotic interpretation that a bicameral legislature ceases to be bicameral when tackling constitutional amendments, even though the Constitution mandates the two chambers to vote separately on all other matters. And third, the Supreme Court would have to repudiate its previous decision, which is always a possibility, but potentially risky for the reputation of its members and the institution itself.

Then the cooperation of the Comelec would be needed. Chair Benjamin Abalos says the Comelec will cooperate. However, during his confirmation hearings, Romeo Brawner said that in the absence of an enabling law, the Comelec has no choice but to throw out any petition concerning a people's initiative. Between the two of them, who is to be believed and who is believable? Abalos? At the very least, the country can kiss any chance of the Comelec redeeming its reputation goodbye. Of course, armed with a convenient Supreme Court reversal, the Comelec would have no problem cooperating with the administration. But that is presuming the Court will cave in.

Next, the well-grounded suspicions of the citizenry would suddenly have to disappear. The public would have to be convinced that President Macapagal-Arroyo isn't interested in avoiding a second round of impeachment efforts. And that she hasn't at least toyed with the idea that with vastly concentrated powers between 2007 and 2010, she would be poised to continue her political career as prime minister after that. The country would have to accept that our present crop of congressmen and governors deserve an extra term without going through an election.

Finally, matters would have to be resolved in a plebiscite, which will be hounded with controversy. Unleashing the floodgates of patronage will only discredit the voting process even further; and with every institution—the executive, Congress and the judiciary—so badly compromised by the effort that the entire mechanism of government might just break down. If patronage becomes widely perceived to be an instrument for cheating, then the temptation for the Armed Forces to resolve the situation becomes irresistible. The AFP cannot endure being suspected of being used as an instrument for electoral manipulation yet again.

The desire of many Filipinos from all walks of life and various political camps to reexamine the constitutional structure of our national and local governments can't be ignored. The real question is whether the means adopted by the administration will foster reforms and result in an improved constitution accepted by the people. We do not see how the effort being pushed by the President's minions will do that.

The effort now underway takes too many shortcuts and employs too many tactics that are contemptuous of the Constitution and public institutions to achieve a healthy and unifying change for the country. But all along, the simpler option of calling a constitutional convention has been there. Resisting the call for a convention only underscores the widespread belief that this option is unpopular with the politicians because it offers very little by way of protecting the vested interests of those who are now holding office.

When people say a constitutional convention would be too expensive, they mean it offers little by way of political payoff. When they say it will take too much time, they mean time that is at a premium for a beleaguered administration. We do not think it is fair, proper or decent to hold the future of the country hostage, because of the partisan needs of the President or her supporters. The Senate has already said it would support a constitutional convention. Much of the public would prefer one, too. The only risk a convention poses is to the timetable of last-termers already in office and the President herself.



STL teaches us that crime pays

As I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz



I THINK THE RESIDENTS OF A CITY OR municipality should be the ones who should decide whether or not they should have *jueteng*—renamed Small Town Lottery—on the streets where they live. The Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, much less the new gambling lords, has no right forcing people to accept gambling in their neighborhoods even if they (the residents) don't want it. And I say hooray to Mayor Feliciano Belmonte for stopping the operations of STL in Quezon City. In the first place, Quezon City is not a small town—it is a big city—so the Small Town Lottery is out of place there, ha, ha, ha. In the second place, no government agency can operate a house of vice in just any place without the approval of its residents. Can the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) set up a drug den anywhere at its pleasure? Can the government grant franchises to prostitution houses to sell their wares in any neighborhood? The people of Quezon City, I am sure, support their mayor in fighting the STL in their midst.

Already, the PCSO and its franchise holders are behaving like the Mafia dons and the gangsters of old by fighting City Hall and the people who do not want gambling invading their neighborhoods. The Philippines is so big that I am sure the vice lords can find other places where the residents will tolerate gambling, they don't have to force themselves into areas where residents abhor it.

And the PCSO, Malacañang and Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno and Presidential Chief of Staff Mike Defensor, and especially President Macapagal-Arroyo, are taking the people too much for granted by allowing STL anywhere there is an applicant for a franchise. Is our nation now being run by gangsters and vice lords?

I think that there should be a plebiscite in any place where the PCSO intends to set up an STL operation wherein the residents will be asked whether or not they agree to allow gambling in their midst.

By the way, Puerto Princess Mayor Edward Hagedorn is being rehabilitated as a deodorizer of STL after two Palace running dogs, Puno and Michael Defensor (Ignacio Bunye is the third), grabbed the top spot from him. Hagedorn had gone home to Puerto Princess, glad to be rid of the monkey on his back, when GMA followed him there the very next day to sweet-talk him into coming back. Defensor, one of the dynamic duo who ousted Hagedorn, quickly issued a statement from Malacañang saying that "we requested (Hagedorn) to continue to implement anti-*jueteng* operations, in particular, STL as a parallel (effort) to compete with and kill *jueteng*."

Actually, Hagedorn was not happy over the way his formula for fighting *jueteng* was corrupted by the PCSO to favor the *jueteng* lords. His original idea was to provide alternative jobs to the thousands of *cobrodadores* and *cabos* who would be made jobless by the closure of *jueteng* operations. The ideal was to give them other means of livelihood, but since the administration is not imaginative enough to create new jobs, the compromise was to operate—temporarily—a parallel STL to wean them and the public away from *jueteng*. Otherwise, they would continue to work for the *jueteng* lords while they conducted guerrilla operations.

But his recommendation was to have local government units (LGUs)—not private franchise holders, who would most likely be the old *jueteng* lords or their dummies—operate STL, with local officials and employees, policemen and military personnel, and even provincial officials and congressmen, getting a per-

centage of the net income, with the remainder going to their constituents in the form of social services. That way, the officials and employees wouldn't be tempted to accept bribes from colorum operators and instead fight them wholeheartedly because the more the colorums eat into the income of the legal STL, the less their percentage shares would be.

As for the betting public, they would prefer to place their bets with the LGU-run STL rather than with the colorums because their bet would go back to them in the form of social services. Besides, the draw would be held in the public plaza where everybody could watch, as against the colorums which draw the winning numbers in secret. Thus, there would be no cheating.

Instead of following Hagedorn's recommendations, however, the PCSO, because of laziness, just threw the right to operate STL to any applicants for franchises who can pay the millions they are asking for. It is noteworthy that the PCSO does not ban the old *jueteng* lords from applying for franchises. They don't even have to use dummies; they can operate in their own names. The only consideration is money, money, money. Bong Pineda has already been reported in the newspapers as having cornered the STL operations in Pampanga and neighboring areas.

Thus, the PCSO and Malacañang are rewarding the *jueteng* lords. They are teaching our people that "crime pays" and that the old accepted lesson that "crime does not pay" is not true anymore. Furthermore, they teach up that "if you violate a law long enough, the government would get tired and legalize that crime."

Thus, the disappointed Hagedorn immediately went home to Puerto Princess. The President, however, wisely realized that STL would sink to high heavens and asked Hagedorn to deodorize it. But how can he do that unless she tells the PCSO to follow his original proposals to the letter?

Jazz in time

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros



I FIRST HEARD MON DAVID SING LIVE SOME years ago at a jazz festival in Galleria. A series of jazz artists was scheduled to perform there that month, and Mon appeared with the group that included Cooky Chua with Affinity, Mishka Adams with the Blue Echoes, and several others. I had heard Mon sing before, of course, on CD. But I wasn't quite prepared for the real thing.

Mon sang "Nature Boy" and a couple of other songs. "Nature Boy," written by E. Ahbez, was originally sung by Nat King Cole but was popularized by the movie "Moulin Rouge" which had just played to local movie houses a year or so before. It's the song where you find the lines, "The greatest thing you'll ever learn/Is just to love and be loved in return."

Mon sang it with remarkable silkiness and depth, his voice breezing past the highs and lows like a bird winging blithely through the gullies and hills of a shimmering landscape. You knew you were in the presence of talent.

That is not so easy to say in a country teeming with talent, or indeed with musical geniuses. "Genius" is not a word I am using too loosely here, especially so in a festival that showcased it in all its resplendence. With Mon, as with other musicians who have mastered their craft, you are no longer looking at virtuosity—they are past that. You are looking at artistry. You are looking at, or hearing, something that goes beyond the instrument they are playing, whether that is keyboard, or strings, or voice. There is a point at which the instruments begin to act independently of their players, becoming incantations that allow music to leap to life and bedazzle us.

I remembered this after I read on our front page last week that Mon had won the London International Jazz Competitions last week. I know only as much of the details as the other readers of our newspapers; he won't be back till next week. He opened with a few bars of an ethnic tune, shifted a cappella to "Nature Boy," and went to sing "Someone to Watch Over Me" and "Lullaby of Birdland." Mon himself would

say later, "I was in a trance." A feeling all true artists know whatever the profession. Which includes sports. Basketball players themselves talk of being "in the zone," a reference to the Twilight Zone, where strange and often magical things happen. At one point, Mon said, he knew he had connected with the audience, and the music, or muse, which or who are one and the same thing, just took over.

What can I say? I wasn't all that surprised it happened. With talent like that, you knew Mon was going places. Our common friends would later tell me he is living proof of Edison's aphorism that genius is 99 percent perspiration and 1 percent inspiration. He believes in hard work, and buckles down to it every day. You can't find someone with more discipline, a friend tells me. At 52, he's still trying earnestly to learn, he's still trying to get a crack at perfection. Of course, few of his friends will agree the inspiration is just 1 percent. Sincere industry doesn't always do the trick.

On top of everything, it couldn't have happened to a nicer guy. A well-known and respected figure in the jazz landscape, having played practically all the jazz joints in this country, Mon is one of the most laid-back and unassuming creatures you can hope to find. To say that he does not announce his presence with trumpets is to understate things. He hovers in the background, is quick to smile, and presses his conversation gently. There must be something to that Biblical story about the exalted being humbled, and the humble exalted. I'm happy for him.

And for the countless other musicians of this country whose stock has suddenly increased

by leaps and bounds, with, I can only hope, the most salutary effects on their livelihood. I'm especially happy that Mon did well in a jazz competition, recognition in that one field of music having eluded us thus far. We already have a Cecile Licad in classical music, a Lea Salonga in musical theater, and countless divas in pop songs, all storming their world with their abilities. It's time we had someone doing that for jazz. If I know Mon, he would be first to balk at being put in the same class as Licad and Salonga, but what the heck, he deserves it. As do some of the truly brilliant jazz artists in our midst, who are barely able to eke out a living playing their kind of music.

There are too many of them, but some of those I do know who easily qualify in that class (my monumental apologies to those I do not know) are Toti Tolentino, who plays magnificent sax, Joey Quirino, Butch Saulog, Rua Villena Osorio, keyboard players all (Rua, a UP music grad, is a prodigious composer as well as player; I saw her recital last year which featured her compositions from ethnic to jazz to classical, and she's only in her middle 20s!), Aya Yuson, Johnny Alegre, Mike Villegas and the great Noli Aurilio, guitar players all (I once heard Noli play the entire orchestral arrangement of Paul McCartney's "Live and Let Die" on solo guitar!), Colby de la Calzada, Donde Ledesma, Simon Tan, Louis Talan, bass players, and Koko Bermejo who plays drums with a frown of concentration on most of these bands and poses puzzles and musical quizzes with a smile of delectation afterward.

It just breaks the heart to see them play to half-empty (and that would be lucky!) jazz joints, which themselves are disappearing faster than the musicians can play their notes. I can only hope Mon David's breakthrough will spark a resurgence of sorts, awaken interest in the kind of music they play, break the carapace of indifference or even hostility to music that actually asks the listener to listen.

Strange and magical things do happen in the zone.

Impregnable stone walls

UNFORTUNATELY, THERE COULD NOT HAVE been a worse time to launch the people's initiative campaign to revise the Constitution than now, when other options for Charter change and/or for an early exit of President Macapagal-Arroyo appear to have closed.

There are in reality two parallel campaigns under way. The first seeks to revise the Constitution with the aim of replacing the presidential system with the parliamentary system. The second, which calls for less fundamental changes, seeks to cut short the President's term at the earliest possible time, if not immediately.

Some citizens, worried over the political and economic consequences of the seemingly endless stalemates, have begun to see that these two trends could be rechanneled toward a convergence at a middle ground, that is, a historic compromise that will put to rest the issue of the legitimacy of the Arroyo presidency, and restore political stability. But the voices searching for the elusive so-called "middle ground" are so few that their forlorn voices are drowned by the clamorous political rhetoric.

Among these voices can be counted former President Fidel Ramos, who has proposed since July last year a timetable for a shift to the parliamentary system by June 2007 (a few months from now) that could at the same time open a face-saving exit for President Arroyo; and Sen. Edgardo Angara, who only last March, proposed a joint resolution of the House and the Senate that would enable Congress to amend the Constitution but limit the changes to revamping the Commission on Elections and cutting the terms of both President Arroyo and Vice President Noli de Castro to extricate the nation from its gridlock. As Angara put it, "If we agree on this with the House, we will file a joint resolution to shorten the term of both the President and Vice President so that it will usher in a fresh election. Then the question of legitimacy and mandate will be laid to rest."

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

No sooner had Angara released the trial balloon than it was shot down by his Senate colleagues who have formed a solid phalanx to oppose a proposal by Speaker Jose de Venecia who has lined up most of the House behind a resolution seeking the convening of the two chambers as a constituent assembly to revise the Constitution. The option of constituent assembly has already hit an impasse, and so has the option of convening a constitutional convention, favored by the senators.

Both Ramos, Angara and the few who are attracted to the idea of a shift to the parliamentary system and at the same time cutting short Ms Arroyo's term by 2007 share the same objectives. Angara's proposal seeks in effect a snap election, an objective of the militants in the streets. What's sad is that the motives of those who share these basic objectives—a system shift and early exit for Ms Arroyo—have become suspect. They are suspected of promoting self-serving political agenda, a suspicion that sidetracked serious examination of the merit of the proposals as a way to end the legitimacy crisis.

The impasse between the two Houses over Mode 1, the constituent assembly, and Mode 2, the constitutional convention, drove the President to the third option spelled out in the Constitution: a people's initiative. This was the last card played to break the impasse.

Two other options—both outside the constitutional framework—to put an end to the legitimacy crisis have been tried and failed. These are people power to force the President to resign and a coup d'etat. These two modes appear to have

fizzled when not enough people massed in the streets to unseat the Arroyo administration and the military proved to be divided. This division is bad for the government because it means that it rests on a fragile foundation of military loyalty to constitutional civilian authority.

The next question is, if the people's initiative fails as a constitutional remedy, where does the crisis move? Back to the streets? Another coup d'etat? Is it reasonable to redirect the crisis back to the two other blocked modes of Charter change? This means that the failure of the people power and coup options may have opened the way to a historic compromise. Can the Senate and the House and the President negotiate the terms of Charter change under Modes 1 and 2?

When the people's initiative campaign was launched, the President and her opponents began to stonewall on maximalist positions. The President's maximalist position is that she serves out her term until 2010. She insists on shifting to a parliamentary system, and has given hints that the question of cutting short her term might be considered in the transitory provisions of a new constitution.

The maximalist position of her equally uncompromising foes is that she has to go at the earliest possible time. They have no patience to wait even until 2007. But they have a problem. They don't have the force to carry out their demand or to drag her out of Malacañang feet first.

Thus, the crisis has arrived at a showdown of two maximalist positions. It has reached a deadlock that gives urgency to the search of a middle ground for a political compromise. The people's initiative has brought this issue to a head.

Compromise is not possible when the opposing sides are not willing to abandon their conviction that winning political conflicts in a democracy means that the winner takes all. The obvious negotiating point that has emerged from these stalemates is the terms of settlement of the 2007 exit.

Warring spouses

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

WHEN A MARRIAGE BREAKS DOWN AND THE principals go to court, both parties always claim they're looking out for the best interests of the children, the real "innocent parties" caught in the crossfire between the estranged spouses.

So it is with Chinoy couple W. and N., whose 10-year marriage is in its death throes. Married in 1995, W. and N. have been separated since 2003, when W. "secretly" filed a petition for nullity, alleging psychological incapacity on N.'s part because of the following reasons: she could not get along with her mother-in-law (his mother), she was a compulsive shopper bent on squandering his earnings, and she had been unfaithful.

The last accusation N. simply laughs off. "How could I be having an affair when I'm with the children 24/7?" she asks. Since she got married, says N., she's devoted her life to maintaining her marriage and family, looking after her three children, ages 10, 8 and 6.

But she easily concedes the first ground. From the beginning, N. admits, she and her mother-in-law have been at loggerheads, but she believes it would have been the case whoever W. married. "He's the eldest child and only son," N. explains, but even given traditional Chinese mores, what a psychologist called the "symbiotic ties" between W. and his mother is something else.

As the years passed, and the children were born, W. despite a promise he made soon after the wedding, continued to insist on living in the family compound with his parents (his father died in 1999). N. stepped up her campaign to get W. to move to a separate dwelling, but as W.'s mother boasted: "You cannot take my son away from me because he was born from my birth canal and he suckled at my breast." Why the old woman insisted on keeping her son's family so close to her is mystifying, since she also alleged that every time she caught sight of N., she would feel palpitations and her blood pressure would rise.

"I GAVE it my best try," N. says of her attempts to salvage her relationship with W.

They went for marriage counseling not just once but several times. At first, they went to see a

priest, but W. stopped showing up when he felt the priest was "favoring" N. Then they started seeing a psychiatrist who had been recommended by W.'s friends, but again he called a halt to the sessions when the psychiatrist told N., "You don't need to see me, it's your mother-in-law who has a problem."

Friends with Couples for Christ scheduled a counseling session with some "elders" to get W. and N. to work things out. When the situation had been diagnosed as stemming from N.'s continuing unhappiness at being under her mother-in-law's thumb, "W. promised in front of the elders that he would buy a house and that we would live on our own," recalls N.

But once again, W. reneged on his promise, and in frustration, N. pleaded for a "cooling off" period of six months, moving into a condominium unit owned by her own family and took the children with her. W. showed up some time later, begging to be taken back, and for a while, N. allowed him to move into the condo.

It turns out, though, that it was around this time that W. decided to file a petition for nullity. N. found out about his plans only after she read the contents of his secretary's notebook, where her husband had detailed, among others, plans to hire a private investigator to monitor her activities, have her phone tapped and transfer stocks and other conjugal assets and properties to "dummy" individuals and groups.

While the petition for nullity was still pending in court, W., through his car dealership company and his secretary, claiming to be the owners of the two notebooks, filed a case of theft against N. On a

Friday afternoon, while N. was in a hospital looking after her ailing father, police showed up with a warrant of arrest for N., and it was only after her lawyers feverishly worked out bail that she narrowly escaped spending the weekend in jail.

But it would not be the end of the harassment that N. underwent. W. filed a case of "kidnapping" against her, claiming she had spirited out the children without his consent. In January 2004, as N. was preparing to move into her parents' home, W. walked into the condominium unit where N. was staying and, over the objections of the maids and the children, proceeded to take everything in it, including appliances and even their clothes. Some time later, he managed to open their safety deposit box and took everything in it, including heirloom jewelry that had been given to N. long before her marriage.

Friends would later tell N. that W. had vowed "to strip N. of everything, including the children." He also added that he would be "willing to sacrifice this family if N. continues to refuse to bow down to my mother."

THE LATEST legal skirmish in their annulment case involves the amount of monthly support that W. is obligated to provide. While N. has demanded P80,000 a month, W. appealed—and the judge agreed with him—to slash the amount to P35,000, less than half what N. asked for. W., or rather, his mother, has also committed to pay for the children's education and health needs.

At present, W. also enjoys custody of the children on weekends, although the children themselves allegedly told the judge hearing the case that "you can't force us to see our father if we don't want to."

A mutual friend recently approached N. and told her to seek the help of the media allegedly because "knowing W., he is beginning to think that it would be far cheaper to hire someone to kill you than have to keep paying" his way through the legal system.

If that's true, then this case of warring spouses goes far beyond the private sphere.

'Useless information'

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

ments in the 1926 Philippines Free Press and I couldn't help copying out the text of one ad that claimed: "Bear Brand Milk is the milk of the healthiest cows in the world, the cows of the beautiful valley of Emmenthal, Switzerland! For the sake of your children's health as well as yours, insist on this brand—the guarantee of wholesomeness as well as purity." How come it never crossed anyone's mind why the bear on the trademark feeds her cub with canned cow milk from a bottle complete with a "nipple" or chupon? This was obviously the age before the breastfeeding campaigns that insist that breast milk is best for baby.

Today we have different kinds of milk that come in liquid and powdered form. We cannot even imagine the days when there were other choices for milk. Apolinario Mabini was partial to carabao milk, and after his exile in Guam, he feasted on tainted gatas kalabaw in Manila and died of cholera.

Milk was such an issue in the late 19th-century Philippines that one of the research papers Antonio Luna undertook after he returned from his studies in the Institut Pasteur in Paris was on the purity of carabao milk. Cow milk was given such a premium that cows were imported from abroad and were considered newsworthy. One of the headlines in the January 1926 Philippines Free Press was "A King comes to the Philippines." It was not human royalty but a cow. King Prospect Bonheur was a Holstein-Friesian bull, with pedigree from Segis Pieterse Prospect, the world's greatest milk producing cow which allegedly av-

eraged 100 lb of milk per day for two years. Less than one percent of the 25 million cows in the United States at the time produced 100 lb of milk in any single day during their entire productive life. The rich product of this "Queen of Milk" (one wonders whether there is a "King of Milk") was packaged and known under the Carnation brand. So this King Prospect, at eight months old, was the "youngest of the royal family." The cow was imported by Don Tomas Rosales y Requena of Corabato. Does this royal cow still have descendants in Mindanao? That's another story.

A researcher in the future who will go through my papers in the archives of the University of the Philippines will find a lot of notebooks and note cards filled with obscure information like the above. There is so much useless information lying around and it takes some skill to weave all these loose strands into one coherent narrative. I have made a career from Ruzal's notebooks, and someone in the future can make another career on my notes alone. Some samples: I have notes on Dwight D. Davis who is a forgotten name to Filipinos except for the coveted Davis Cup given out for tennis. Davis was a former US secretary of war whose portfolio at the time included the Philippines. Davis himself was one of the first three defenders of the trophy; later there were the Aragon brothers who competed for the cup.

There is a whole card on Isabelo de los Reyes whose photograph appeared in the 1926 Philippines Free Press. De los Reyes was shown posing with his 23rd child! There are also quotable quotes on his being an anarchist and details about how he made a living by organizing weekly dances where the daughters of laborers (he was a labor leader) worked as "bailarinatas" who were paid 10 centavos per dance. He also owned a shooting gallery with air rifles. Oh, if only the world appreciated useless information, I would be rich.

Comments are welcome at ocampo@neo.edu

Chopsticks tax

IN 2000, THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM ranked the Philippines 77th among 174 nations with the human development index (HDI), a composite measure that looks at how nations fare in terms of economics and social progress. That year, China lagged far behind us, ranking 99th.

By 2005, we had dropped to 84th while China had climbed to just a notch below us, ranking 85th.

These shifts in the HDI rankings should alert us to the need to look at how China is pursuing its development, and see what lessons we might pick up.

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

English?

Two weeks ago, I wrote about how we waste so much time debating on whether to use English or Filipino in schools as a key to national development. I argued that the way to go is to start with local languages (Tagalog in Tagalog areas, Cebuano in Cebuano areas) and then move on to teach students a national language, Filipino, and later offer English and other foreign languages as options.

Priority to a national language was the choice many countries took in our part of the world, and now they're reaping the benefits. Contrary to popular misconceptions, we can and should teach the sciences and math in Filipino and local languages. That was the way Japan progressed, as did China.

Now comes news that China's education ministry wants to offer English in primary schools. Their education minister first announced that some 100 million Chinese schoolchildren would learn English. The vice minister announced the next day that actually there would be some 300 million children benefiting from the English lessons.

How did the public react? Hong Kong commentators, always outspoken, criticized the move, saying China didn't need 300 million speakers of English. A few million would suffice, they pointed out, mainly to be able to conduct business with the world and pick up their technology.

That's food for thought. I know that the Philippines has a different situation, with the way we're trying to export workers and get more of the outsourcing market, such as call centers, but I've already written about how we need to improve our standards not just for English but also for science and technology, and we can't do that if we continue to have a muddled language policy, one which has left Filipinos proficient neither in English nor Filipino.

In my last column on language, I pointed out that once we learn to respect ourselves, especially with a national language, the world will begin to talk with us, rather than to us. Note that even as more Chinese learn to speak English so they can move their nation forward, people elsewhere are now scrambling to learn Chinese. In London, 40 primary schools have already entered into a twinning program with counterparts in Beijing, so their students can communicate by computer and teach each other English and Chinese. Last month, Gordon Brown, Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer (more or less equivalent to the US treasury secretary), visited China and said that he expects every school in Britain—from the primary to university level—to find a Chinese "twin" within the next five years.

Environment-friendly taxes

Let me get back to China, to another rather unique aspect of their development strategy. Their Finance Ministry recently announced a package of new consumption taxes that will go into effect in April. One of the measures calls for a new 5 percent tax on disposable wooden chopsticks. With China producing some 45 billion pairs of chopsticks each year, that could mean a lot of revenues. But that is not the main reason for the new tax.

To produce all those chopsticks, 25 million trees are chopped down each year. Chinese officials recognize that there are long-term costs for this massive use of trees, and hope that the additional tax sends a message to people about the need to reduce their use of disposable chopsticks. Besides the chopsticks, wooden floor panels will also be taxed 5 percent, again a bid to save trees.

The new taxes have elicited mixed reactions. Environmental activists are skeptical, pointing out that chopsticks and wooden floor panels aren't the main reason for deforestation. One irreverent Internet blogsite on environmental economics asked if a toothpick tax was in the offing.

But the new tax measure has impressed other environmentalists as a sign that the Chinese government is seriously looking at how environmental degradation might derail its plans for development.

Together with the chopsticks tax, China is also increasing taxes on cars with engines bigger than 2 liters, the rate to increase from 8 percent to 20 percent. On the other hand, cars with engines between 1 and 1.5 liters will have their taxes cut from 5 percent to 3 percent. New taxes will also be imposed now on various fuel products.

China is now the world's third biggest vehicle market, after the United States and Japan. The cars account for a third of China's total oil use, and is a major contributor to air pollution.

First World

The adjustments on car taxes have a strong environmental component, but these tax reforms are also meant to reduce the conspicuous consumption among China's new rich, which has contributed to growing social discontent as the gap between the rich and the poor widens. China's development has been phenomenal, but some 200 million Chinese still live on less than \$1 a day.

Besides the hike in luxury car taxes, there will now be a 20-percent tax on luxury watches. Yachts and golf equipment will now be taxed 10 percent.

It looks like China is indeed serious about pursuing a development strategy that's well described in its China Modernization Report 2005, a study put together by Chinese experts from various fields.

"China must follow a way of co-ordinately developing its industries and agriculture, improving ecosystems in the process, adopting high technologies along with appropriate ones and pushing forward its national economy in line with globalization."

I know that sounds like a lot of rhetoric, but recent developments around the use of English in schools, and the new environment-friendly taxes, do suggest the Chinese government is serious about getting on the right track with development.

What does strike me, too, is the Chinese's conservatism when it comes to projections on their economic development. The China Modernization Report estimates that China could become a "moderately developed country" by 2050, and a developed country by 2080.

Compare all that to our President announcing, several times now, that the Philippines will become a First World country in 20 years, if we stay on track with her economic program, including her new taxes and now, Charter change.

Not all Indians are into 5/6

I FIND IT RATHER IRONIC THAT a day after a documentary about Indians living in the Philippines was shown on TV—which I felt helped clear up some misconceptions/racist attitudes toward them—I find an article calling them as “foxy foreigners” who “gallop all over town and prey on poor Filipino vendors.” (PDI, 3/14/06) The article, which was actually a two-part series, also described the Indians as “invaders” who “victimize” people with their “suspicious” operations.

I shall not argue about the legality or morality of “5/6 money-lending,” about which I myself have qualms. But I must take issue with the condemnatory tone of the series, which seemed to reinforce racist stereotypes against Indians.

Not all Indians in the Philippines are involved in 5/6. But then the series cited statistics from the Indian Ministry of External Affairs and made sure to mention that the businessmen and moneylenders interviewed were Indians. Couple this with phrases like “prey on the hapless poor,” and I couldn’t help but think that, in the minds of many readers, the series gave the impression that Indians, in general, are people who prey on others. The writers even quoted somebody who described the 5/6 operators as “blood-sucking” and “selfish, cheating moneylenders.” Clearly, the writers of the series had no qualms about injecting

their own opinion into the article, something I was once told is a big no-no in newswriting.

I wonder what the objective of the series was? Has the 5/6 operation gotten so oppressive that the INQUIRER felt the need to run a series on it? Did not the INQUIRER editors consider the series’ impact on the lives of ordinary Indians with legitimate businesses and jobs, who are living here?

One cannot deny that there already exists a kind of racial discrimination against Indians here. The series could only aggravate it. Another irony was its timing—so soon after the Indian President made a state visit to the country.

I shudder to think of what could happen to me outside my home, as I walk past people on my way to school. People who have read the series most probably would easily spot my “dusky, distinct Indian features,” never mind that I am also half-Filipino. And they might also think that I am an “intruder,” a “selfish, cheating moneylender,” galloping all over town and preying on poor Filipino vendors.

And to think that the INQUIRER once published in the Youngblood section an article of mine, which was about tolerance and the dangers of bigotry.

—AJEET PANEMANGLO,
24 Madrid St.,
Merville Park Subdivision,
Parañaque City

This is in reaction to the special series on illegal moneylenders. (PDI, 3/15, 16/06) Illegal lending has been going on for a long time here in Bacolod City. You can see Indians, Pakistanis, etc. on motorcycles with their Filipino collectors or *dalays* every day. They go into lending and collect the payments openly, especially in public markets. No agencies are concerned about their activities. We even hear they are also into drugs (it is not farfetched), so it seems they are untouchables.

These foreigners are now buying real property in exclusive subdivisions like Capriolville, much to the disgust of the old families who have been staying there for decades. Some of them are very arrogant, especially now that they are well-placed.

We call on the concerned agencies, such as the Bureau of Immigration, Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Philippine National Police, to do something about their illegal businesses. Otherwise, sooner or later, it will be very hard to control and check them. They will be a source of graft and corruption.

Also, stores like the 168 Mall in Divisoria are beginning to sprout here, and it seems the city government and the BIR are doing nothing about it.

—MARIA CARLA DE LEON,
Burgos Street, Bacolod City

Why fault GMA for the sins of other people?

THIS IS IN REACTION TO REV. Salvador D. Eduarte’s letter titled “Why GMA finds it hard to resign” (PDI, 3/7/06). It is our country’s tragedy that most people cannot identify anymore between black and white. People like Eduarte, who are supposed to be models for their Christian followers, should be careful in expressing their ideas.

I am a Catholic but, sad to say, there are also some priests and bishops making accusations, unthinkingly, that they are violating the biblical injunction “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.” Some nuns also accuse the President, as a tyrant but on what grounds? So far, despite several coup attempts, there has been no death, unlike during the rule of President Aquino and President Marcos.

There are those who say that GMA cheated in the 2004 elec-

tions. Some say she used public money to advance her personal interests. But can they prove it? All these are just allegations. Besides, there are different people in different positions with different agendas. Why blame the President for these people’s fault?

There are worse leaders than GMA, and they are wolves in sheep’s clothing. But then I might just as well choose the lesser evil.

I am supporting GMA not for anything else but for the sake of our country. I support her because I find her sincere and she has qualified to lead this poor country duped for a long time by greedy politicians.

If GMA were to be toppled, who would replace her and assure us of genuine service? Could we be sure that he would be a leader brave enough to do anything that’s good for our people—even at the expense of his political career? What

we have now certainly looks like a Supreme Being guiding some people to take the lead and sparing us from the “masters of deception.”

The communists will not stop making noise and sowing chaos, whoever will be sitting on the presidential seat. They want to take control of the government. They have their own agenda. Some traditional politicians also want to grab power for themselves. These masters of deception have joined forces to overthrow the government. If we allow ourselves to be fooled by these people, we may wake up one day and find ourselves in a worse situation.

Let us be vigilant that we do not fall into that tragedy, and let us ask the Lord’s enlightenment so we will act to uphold morality and the divine truth.

—JUN DUMALAG,
c/o enuy95@yahoo.com



A leader like Joshua

THE MOST SERIOUS ISSUE THAT divides our country today is the legitimacy of the presidency of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

Can impeachment, snap election, people power, coup d’etat, military junta or Cha-cha settle this issue? We have already tried most of these “solutions,” but none of them has solved the problems of our country.

Let me therefore remind my fellow Filipinos of what the Bible says regarding this particular problem of our nation. “Moses said to Yahweh, May Yahweh, God of the spirits that give life to all living creatures, appoint a leader for this community, who shall go out and bring them in so that the community of Yahweh may not be like sheep without a shepherd.”

God answered this prayer by appointing Joshua to succeed Moses. Joshua would lead the Israelites to the Promised Land. God knew just what the people needed, so He gave them a wise, experienced, dependable and honest leader in Joshua.

The Filipinos are currently going through the same problem. Let us pray to God that He may give us a leader like Joshua. Let us ask God for direction and then trust Him with His choice.

—DR. LUISITO S. SAN VALENTIN,
The Holy Church of Yahweh,
Quezon City

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Neither absolute nor weaponless

CONTRARY TO AMANDO DORONILA’s claims in his March 10 column, the press is not a weaponless institution. Neither is it correct to say that it has no means to violence. Just like any democratic institution, if wrongly and recklessly used, the press could be detrimental to the survival of society.

The space in his column would not be enough if we wrote down the people, reputations, relationships and resources the media had destroyed through erroneous and malicious reporting.

Please be reminded that press

freedom, or any freedom for that matter, is not absolute. It is limited by other institutions and/or the overall society’s right to exist.

President Macapagal-Arroyo made the right decision in issuing Proclamation 1017. Her performance, past and present, is more trustworthy than the perpetually destabilizing, poor performance of some media organizations and practitioners, opposition members, senators, rogue soldiers and communists.

—JORGE DIONEDA,
jorgen423@yahoo.com

1017’s first media casualty

THE FIRST “MEDIA CASUALTY” of Proclamation No. 1017 was not The Daily Tribune but a radio program. When 1017 was issued last Feb. 24, the management of dzRJ suspended the airing of “Ngayon Na, Bayan!” The station’s only award-winning radio program produced by Kodao Productions Inc. used to air from 2:30 p.m. to 4 p.m., Monday to Friday.

“Ngayon Na, Bayan!” engages listeners in an open discussion on political and economic issues. Its anchor was Sonia Capio, with Benjie Oliveros (Mondays), Raymond Villanueva (Tuesdays), Ruth Cervantes (Wednesdays), Fr. Joe Orzon (Thursdays) and Prof. Danny Arao (Fridays) as co-hosts.

The Kapisanan ng mga Brodcaster ng Pilipinas (KBP) has recognized the quality of “Ngayon Na, Bayan!” by awarding it the 2002 Golden Dove Award for Best Public Affairs Program in Metro Manila. The radio program has also been a finalist in the Catholic Mass Media Awards (CMMMA).

Despite the lifting of Proclamation 1017 last March 3, the award-winning radio program remains suspended.

You can help bring it back on the air by calling dzRJ at 895-4546 or 897-8374. Please ask: “Wala na ba ang ‘Ngayon na, Bayan?’”

—RICHARD CORONEL,
richard_coronel@yahoo.com

Taking credit for the sunshine but not for the falling rain

THIS IS TO TAKE EXCEPTION TO the news item “Trees keep falling in Aurora forests” (PDI, 2/25/06), which reported that illegal logging is “rampant” and remains “unchecked” in Aurora.

Since the 2004 killer landslides in that province, only two incidents of timber poaching (not illegal logging as reported) have been confirmed in the towns of Dingalan and Baler. Both incidents led to the confiscation of 3.87 cubic meters of lumber. The case, involving the confiscation of 34 pieces of fitches (not logs as reported) is only the third case of illegal tree-cutting in that area in two years. Clearly, three minor incidents in two years do not make for “rampant and unchecked illegal logging.”

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources continues to closely coordinate with local governments, law enforcement agencies and ordinary citizens (also sources of intelligence reports) to clamp down on illegal logging operations in Central Luzon.

To say that it was “through the efforts of the parish pastoral council that policemen and foresters seized the logs” is the height of hypocrisy and arrogance.

DENR forest protection officers in Dingalan may have acted with dispatch in confiscating the fitches following a tip from the parish pastoral council led by Fr. Antonio Evangelio (not Evangelista as reported), but isn’t public vigilance a matter of civic duty even among members of the clergy?

The “motorized boats (observed by parishioners) docking at the bay almost every night to unload logs” were part of the retrieval operations to clean up Dingalan Bay which had been littered with forest debris and washed logs in the aftermath of the landslides. So far,

some 260,000 board feet, valued at P7 million or so, have been retrieved—and milled upon the request of the Department of Social Welfare and Development for use in Dingalan’s rehabilitation projects. The retrieval operations officially ended on Jan. 6, 2006.

To say that trees are cut on an almost daily basis in Barangay Paltuc is downright absurd. The barangay is on a stone’s throw away from a DENR unit, which also doubles as a monitoring station. That barangay is even closer to the municipal hall where the local police station is located. There is simply no way that illegal tree cutting can happen there every day without the knowledge of local officials, the police and DENR personnel.

Granting that Father Evangelio’s claim is true, that the highly illegal and sinful act of cutting trees goes on in Dingalan every day, isn’t this an indictment of the failure of the parish pastoral council, which is supposed to look after the morals of its parishioners?

Father Evangelio wants to take credit for the sunshine, he should as well take credit for rains.

—REGIDOR M. DE LEON,
regional executive director,
Department of Environment and Natural Resources (Region 3)

Although cut due to limited space, the story carried the side of DENR Aurora officer Benjamin Miña who denied that illegal logging in San Luis, Dingalan and other towns in Aurora was rampant. As for the other points that De Leon raised, these are best for Fr. Antonio Evangelio to respond to.

—TONETTE OREJAS,
correspondent,
PDI Central Luzon Desk

Edsa: an avenue of lust

I HAVE ALWAYS CONSIDERED the Inquirer one of the vanguards of truth and responsible journalism. But allow me to air my disappointment with a recent article “Your daily dose of Vitamin C,” written by Tim Yap. (PDI, 3/11/06) I believe that the Superl section should promote human and cultural upliftment.

Yap, with his whimsical comments on Cindy Kurleto’s daring exposure at Edsa, degraded the image and dignity of women. By inviting every qualified male in the capital to feast on Kurleto’s billboards—to their condescension’s content, he converted women into mere objects of pleasure.

Yap suggested a promiscuous attitude when he said, “I don’t care how many men share Cindy—we can all have a piece of her.” Once again, the woman was presented as an object to be lustfully dissected.

Finally, I disapprove of Yap “rallying” men to Edsa to “send Cindy a flying kiss.” Sadly, this statement strips Edsa of its historical and social significance—a symbol of freedom and justice—and converts it into an avenue for unleashing our passions.

—FRANCIS ONCKINGCO,
Kasambagan, 6000
Cebu City

Lost, crumbling, disappearing historic landmarks in Manila

IT PAINS ME TO SEE BEAUTIFUL, and even historic, places in Manila falling into ruin little by little or disappearing.

For example, the University of Santo Tomas campus has lost its beauty. The university itself seems to have lost its sense of history. The small UST press building, one of the oldest buildings in the Philippines, is nowhere to be seen. Years back, the main building was very visible, making for a commanding presence. There was nothing to distract one’s view of it. Not anymore, with the campus itself playing host to a slew of commercial establishments.

This, after we have lost the Jai-

Aini building on Taft Avenue. I thought that after it was demolished, in its place would immediately rise the proposed Hall of Justice. That was years ago.

Mehan Garden is also nowhere to be seen now. In its place is a parking area. I thought the Metropolitan Theatre will soon be restored. There’s a billboard that says so. When will this renovation take place? The building is crumbling.

I hope the concerned government official(s) will finally give historical landmarks serious attention.

—DANTE C. ARGANOSA,
B12 L5 Galilee St.,
North Olympus, Zabarte,
Novaliches, Quezon City

Deal with cheats before Cha-cha

IS INQUIRER COLUMNIST BEL Cunanan suggesting that because most politicians, including Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, cheated their way in the last or should I say, previous—elections (would former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano attest to this?), we should just shrug our shoulders and let bygones be bygones? (PDI, 3/16/06)

If that is the sort of mentality she is promoting, then truly *kaawa-*

awa nga ang ating lupang hiniyang (our country has become phable).

Cheaters—whether they belong to the opposition or to the administration—should be exposed and punished. This is the type of mentality that we should be advocating.

We should get rid of the politicians who cheat their way to power before we even think of changing the political system.

—MARCOS SIBAL,
msibal@cm2n.com

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Gov sees 12M signatures for Cha-cha

By Jhunex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—THE PRESIDENT OF THE LEAGUE OF PROVINCES of the Philippines (LPP) and the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (Ulap) yesterday claimed that they were almost in "striking distance" to their target of 5 million signatures needed to amend the Constitution through a people's initiative.

Bohol Gov. Erico Aumentado said the number of signatures might even reach 10 million, or over 30 percent of the total number of registered voters nationwide by Friday, the deadline for the gathering of signatures.

He told the INQUIRER that their nationwide monitoring showed a "massive turnout" in favor of Charter change.

"At this time, we have already gotten the striking distance to the (required) 5 million signatures based on my monitoring and it could even be possible that we have already surpassed it by now while we're talking," Aumentado said.

"We can triple the 12 percent signatures of the total registered voters nationwide, which means that we can get at least 30 percent up and that is more or less 10 million to 12 million signatures," he added.

After gathering the signatures, Aumentado said the Sigaw ng Bayan Coalition would submit these to the Commission on Elections for verification.

Aumentado said that if the Comelec would certify the gathered signatures as valid, a plebiscite would be held within 90 days.

If the yes votes will win, the remaining 12 senators whose terms will end on 2010 and the current members of Congress will constitute themselves as members of an "interim parliament."

An interim parliament will also make up the body that will amend the Constitution.

Aumentado remained optimistic that the Supreme Court would favor the people's initiative campaign despite questions on the lack of an enabling law for it.

An ally of President Macapagal-Arroyo, however, called the people's initiative an "expensive exercise in futility."

"The President is ill-advised about this move. This is an expensive exercise in futility, there is no sense, this is non-sense for me," said former Cebu Rep. Pablo Garcia, a member of the 55-man Consultative Commission formed by Malacañang to propose amendments to the Constitution.

Garcia pointed out that the Supreme Court had ruled that Republic Act No. 6735, which provides for a system of initiative and referendum, was inadequate to be used as a basis to change the Charter through people's initiative.



GO NEGOSYO. GO MICRONEGOSYO!



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Makibahagi sa Go Negosyo MicroNegosyo Fair na gaganapin sa Philippine Army Gym, Lawton Avenue corner Bayani Road, Fort Bonifacio sa March 31 at April 1, 2006 mula 9am hanggang 6pm.

Tulad nina Joey Concepcion at Socorro Ramos, mga leading advocates ng Go Negosyo na minsan ay nangarap na umasenso at gumawa ng paraan para makamit ang tagumpay, kayang-kaya mo rin abutin ang iyong mga mithiin. Basta sapat na kaalaman, sipag, dedikasyon at pagmamahal sa trabaho ang iyong puhunan, tiyak na umilad din ang iyong munting pinaghirapan! Makilahok na sa Go Negosyo MicroNegosyo Fair at alamin ang sari-saring paraan kung paano umasenso!

March 31, Friday

Ribbon Cutting (Gov. Generoso Senga • Generals' Wives • Mayor Sigfredo Tinga with Mrs. Tinga • Mayor Rosendo Capco with Mrs. Capco • Marissa Concepcion) • National Anthem • Invocation • Go Negosyo Music Video • Opening Remarks (Jose Ma. Concepcion III) • Businessman Manic Manag (Leo Martinez) • Intro of Program and Interactive Sessions by Host (Carelle Mangalag) • Forum 1: "MicroNegosyo, Kapangyarihan ng Kababaihan" (Moderator - Karen Davila, Panelists: Mina Gabor • Johina Magdangal • Coney Reyes • Cory Quirino • Myrna Yao (NCRFW) • Chit Juan (Figaro) • Cheese Ledesma (The Big Chill) • Jeanne Barz (Balut Express) • Rachel Alejandro (Sexy Chef) • Merle Alferrez (MASA) • Myla Villanueva • Forum 2: "Posibleng Negosyo, Anong Babagay Sa'yo?" (Moderator - Karen Davila, Panelists: Vina Morales • Diether Ocampo • Kuhn Ledesma • Les Reyes (Reyes Haircutters) • Richie Luna (FlorGelato) • Rowena Villegas (Wynski) • Roy Chua (PAGASA) • Agnes Car (Women Inventors Assoc. of the Phils., Inc.) • Testimony: "Ang Balansiyadong Buhay: Pamilya't Negosyo" (Maricel Laka) • GAME SHOW with Small Businesses as Prizes • Makatang Nonoy: Isang Tula Handog sa Kababaihan (Ony Carcamo) • Forum 3: "Perang Pang-negosyo, Saan Ka Nga Ba Tatakbog?" (Moderator - Lyn Ching, Panelists: AFPMBAL (Ma. Corazon Dalao) • AFPSLAI • NLSF (c/o Dennis Hamto) • People's Credit and Finance Corporation • Bayan Foundation (c/o Irma Cosico) • BPI (Ma. Teresa Reyes) • Planters Development Bank (c/o Trixie Paguia) • First Macro Bank (Rafael Serrano) • PSBank (Derick Rasalan) • Phil. Youth Business Foundation (John Walter Baybay) • Testimony: "Pagnegosyo Kasama ang Kapuso't Kapamilya" (Anthony Panglinan) • Talk: "Kalayaan sa Kakapusan" (Francisco Colayco) • Forum 4: "Radyo Negosyo, Mga Payo at Gabay sa Tagumpay" (Moderators: Anna Periquet and Carl Balita, Panelists: Arnel Ignacio • Noel Arroyo • Rommel Juan (Binalot) • Doyee Tumpalan (First Quadrant) • Ricardo Collantes (Kookat's) • Gov. Lray Villafuerte (Lara's Gifts and Decors) • Johnlu Kos (The French Baker) • Sandy Javier (Andok's) • Jay Aldeguer (Island Souvenirs) • Sum Up / Final Interactive Activity by Host

April 1, Saturday

Skills Demo/Training by DOST, Reyes Haircutters, Le Cordon Bleu, TESDA and TLRC • Poivaron and Pastillas Making by Laura Lazaro (WIAP) • Paper Toile by Shirley Fabros (Approtech Asia) • Meat Processing and Dimsum Making c/o Approtech Asia • Tomato-Based Products c/o Approtech Asia • Preserved Sampaloc and Tea Making by Rita Ritz (WIAP) • Cellphone Repair c/o Approtech Asia • Basic Haircutting • Cooking and Food Preparation Demo • Sessions on Starting a Business: How to Start a Franchise Business c/o Association of Filipino Franchisers, Inc. • "Lakbay Katamar: Gourmet Para Sa Masa" c/o Le Cordon Bleu • How to Start a Food Cart Business c/o Food Cart Association of the Philippines • How to Start a Salon/Barbershop c/o Reyes Haircutters • How to Start a Home Spa Business • Business Mentoring Booth Mentoring from 11am to 4pm c/o Anna Periquet • Final list for confirmation

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GMA ally says there's fund for Cha-cha

BAGUIO CITY THERE'S A BUDGET FOR Charter change, an ally of President Macapagal-Arroyo confirmed here last week.

However, Albay Rep. Jose Ma. Salceda, chair of the House committee on appropriations, told government workers on Friday that the President's "real protection" was not a spending plan designed to accommodate constitutional changes but a thriving economy.

Salceda, who described himself as Ms Arroyo's economic adviser, spoke on the last leg of a nationwide advocacy caravan for the expanded value-added tax (VAT), which drew government employees from many parts of Northern Luzon.

He said Ms Arroyo wanted a new, bigger budget for 2006 because it would help Charter change, after Malacañang lobbied for a reinstated budget instead to speed up the conversion of Congress into a constituent assembly.

He said he assumed the committee chairmanship on Feb. 15, yet he was able to get the House of Representatives on Thursday to pass the P1,035-trillion budget plan provided by Malacañang. The House sat on the budget measure for four weeks.

"There are quarters who say the President prefers a reenacted budget. It is flexible enough to allow her to allocate the money, which is why we separated the bill increasing government wages because a reenacted budget is good for Chacha," he said.

Salceda was referring to a P1,000 legislated wage hike that Congress proposed to apply once every year until 2008.

The coalition supporting Charter change has assailed senators who are planning to block a signature campaign, saying that they are not doing what they are elected to do.

Lawyer Raul Lambino, spokesperson of the Sigaw ng Bayan Coalition, said the Senate passed only two laws of national importance last year.

"That is equivalent to P3 billion per law, considering their P6 billion worth of direct budget only," he said. He reacted to the senators' call to stop the nationwide launching of the people's initiative to amend the 1987 Constitution.

"They can not do anything anymore. They are out of the discussion. This depends on the people," Lambino said.

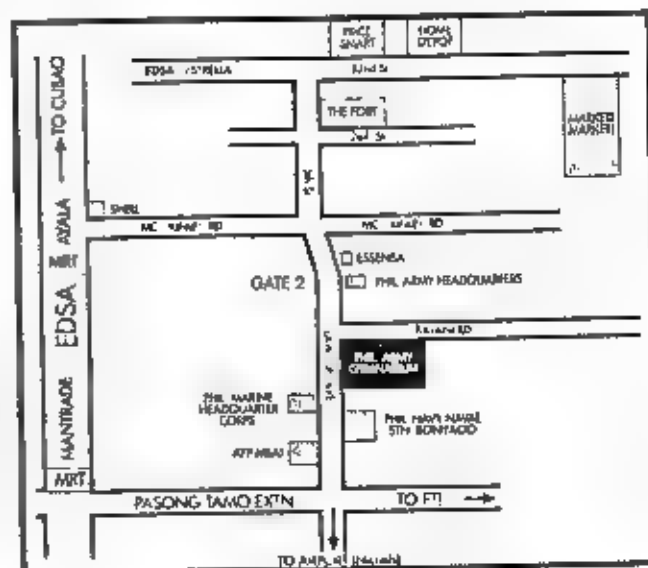
He said that since Monday noon, the Sigaw ng Bayan had gathered 4.5 million signatures.

"This figure does not include Cebu. It includes only the Camanava area in Metro Manila so we expect to gather the required 5 million signatures within the week," he said.

Only 12 percent of the voting population based on the latest election is needed to start the people's initiative. Lambino said the target is 8 million signatures to ensure that the initiative will push through.

He said the Commission on Elections would only need to verify the signatures.

But Sen. Juan Flavier vowed to examine each of the five million signatures, in an effort to stall the initiative. Vincent Cabresia and Frank Climati, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau, and Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk



Philippine Center for Entrepreneurship



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Across the NATION

Group seeks relief of DENR execs in Bulacan

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—AN environmental group on Tuesday asked the relief of environment officials who allegedly failed to implement Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes' order to cancel the hauling permits of a company extracting marble at the Biak-na-Bato National Park in Bulacan.

Mainly liable for the supposed inaction were Mines and Geosciences Bureau Director Jeremias Dolino and Central Luzon Director Angel Bravo, according to Bangon Kalikasan, which has called for the cancellation of the permits.

A day before leaving for a bio-safety conference in Brazil on March 19, Reyes told the Inquirer by phone that he ordered Dolino on March 17 to direct Bravo to cancel all the ore transport permits (OTPs) issued to Rosemor Mining and Development Corp. (RMDC).

Reyes gave the order on the heels of a charge by Bulacan Gov. Josefina de la Cruz that he was "double-talking" on environmental protection policies.

De la Cruz and village officials in San Miguel and Doña Remedios Trinidad towns reported that the hauling of marble had continued in the last nine days.

Acting Environment Secretary Manuel Gerochi on Tuesday said that while a written order had been prepared, this had yet to reach Reyes.

Gerochi said he issued a memorandum on March 27, which was received by Bravo on Tuesday.

Efforts to confirm if Bravo began implementing the order proved futile. He was not in his office and his mobile phone was off.

In the memo, Bravo was ordered to explain why OTPs continued to be issued despite complaints from the provincial government.

He was also ordered to refrain from further issuing permits pending an investigation of the alleged environmental degradation and other violations within the (Mineral Production Sharing Agreement or MPSA) area of RMDC.

He was instructed to retrieve any

remaining marble blocks covered by the OTPs.

Relieving MGB officials, Gerochi said, was within the authority of Reyes.

RMDC president Constantino Pascual on Tuesday said the OTPs issued to his firm "remained valid" because its MPSA No. 188 continued to be in effect. The MPSA was signed by then Environment Secretary Heherson Alvarez in 2002 although the Supreme Court had yet to rule on the cancellation of RMDC's Quarry Permit No. 33 by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Pascual was released from jail on Tuesday after the court cleared him of theft and qualified theft charges filed by his relatives who were claiming ownership of RMDC.

Bangon Kalikasan noted a pending request with Reyes to cancel the MPSA of RMDC. "All other influential or powerful groups will no longer be able to exploit the resources in the area," it said. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Communities true test of mining, says exec

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

CLARK SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE—While the national government has laid out a favorable legal and regulatory climate to revitalize the mining industry, the real test will still be in the communities, a top official of the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines said.

Benjamin Philip Romualdez, CMP president, said mining companies must "demonstrate sincerity" that they are also capable of environmental care and sustainable development.

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, on the other hand, wants to "give the mining industry a chance to prove itself" as mining firms start 23 projects and 37 explorations worth \$8.5 billion, Romualdez said at a seminar here of the Economic Journalists Association of the Philippines last Friday.

The CBCP has assailed the Mining Act of 1995 (Republic Act No. 7942) for its alleged threats to the environment. It has decried the industry's records of accidents before the law got the nod of the Supreme Court.

The law, upheld with finality in February 2005, opens full ownership of local mining projects to foreign investors, renewing interests in the industry.

The industry contributed 2.14 percent to the country's gross domestic product in 1985, declining by 27 percent in the 1990s, trade data showed.

The CBCP statement, according to Romualdez, will have "very little effect on the government's policy."

Earlier, the government said it was going only for "responsible mining" and that firms would be required to put in 10 percent of their gross income to environmental protection.

Romualdez, who noted that the industry was adopting "best practices," said the CMP continued to take on capability-building measures such as training on technology, transparency and social responsibility programs.

The total mineral wealth in the country has been estimated at \$840 billion, with a third of its 13 million hectares considered geologically prospective for mining.

"It's a total shame not to take advantage of the blessings," Romualdez said.

He suggested that the government "invest more" in the Department of Environment and Natural Resources so that the agency would be able to do its functions, mainly in the "proper implementation" of the mining law at the local level.

Romualdez said he hoped there would be no constant changes in the leadership of the DENR, which has seen four secretaries in five years.



KNOCKING ON GOD'S DOOR

A homeless and mentally ill man finds a spot to rest in front of the Archbishop's Palace in Iloilo City after a day of roaming Jaro District and begging for alms.

ARNOLD ALMACEIDA/INQUIRER BUREAU

Wanted: More judges in South

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Supreme Court Justice Angelina Sandoval-Gutierrez said more judges were needed in Mindanao, particularly in areas tagged as conflict-affected.

"We lack judges and the reason is, we lack applicants," Gutierrez said Saturday.

She said security could be one reason only a few had applied for vacant courts in Mindanao. She did not elaborate.

"At least three names should be submitted by the Judicial and Bar Council to the Office of the President, but the fact is, there's no sufficient number of applicants," Gutierrez said.

"If there is only one applicant, it cannot be submitted to Malacañang."

Each of the 10 judges here handles hundreds of cases per day, said Judge Peter Eisma, of the Regional Trial Court Branch 15.

Most of the judges also sit in municipal trial courts in Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-tawi and in other areas of the region.

"We are not yet considering the load of cases in the municipal level," he said.

"The judges go there once a month," Eisma said.

Ricardo Cabaron, Western Mindanao state prosecutor, said the lack of personnel had hounded government prosecution offices.

In the region alone, at least five more prosecutors are needed, he said, but the problem was not about lack of applicants but the process involving appointments. *Julie Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

ROUNDUP

Mindanao program launched

COTABATO CITY—The World Bank launched the Mindanao Trust Fund for Reconstruction and Development Program (MTF-RDP) here on Monday. Joachim Von Amsberg, World Bank Philippines director, led the launching of the program, which aims to promote effective governance processes and help in the recovery of areas devastated by war on the island. Menchie Celestial, of the World Bank Philippines, said the program hopes to contribute to peace and development in Mindanao.

Jeffrey Mañam, PDI Mindanao Bureau

2 nabbed for murder

AURORA, Isabela—Police last week arrested two suspects in the murder of seven family members here. Town police chief Supt. Baltazar Arsal said Edithor and Charita Lbarra had admitted to helping the prime suspect, Ramelito Ybanez, kill members of the Romero family on March 18. The Lbarraes, who were arrested on March 23 in Angeles City, worked as helpers of rice trader Victorio Romero, 63, and his wife, Victoria, 60. The Romero couple, their two daughters and three grandchildren were found dead in their house in Barangay Bagong Tanza on March 20.

Villamor Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Provisional release bill

SORSOGON CITY—A bill is pending in the House of Representatives granting provisional liberty to poor persons accused of non-heinous crimes, without posting bail. Sorsogon Rep. Jose Solis, author of House Bill 4346, said the measure would prevent poor offenders from languishing in jail because they can't afford bail. Solis said many detainees charged with petty crimes languish in jail for years just because they can't pay bail.

Bobby Labalan, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Makiling recycling zone

LOS BAÑOS, Laguna—A partnership between the University of the Philippines at Los Baños and this municipality has been cited for converting an open garbage dump in the Mt. Makiling Forest Reserve into an ecological processing zone. "The former dump is now a zone for recycling activities where an equipment converts garbage into livelihood products useful for households," said Dr. Portia Lapitan, director of the Makiling Center for Mountain Ecosystems (MCME). During a meeting here, mayors in the province expressed support for the declaration of the 4,224-hectare forest reserve as a biodiversity area and watershed that would be maintained by the university.

Romulo Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Musical recollections

INSTEAD OF THE USUAL Lenten talk and recollection, Fr. Jeronimo "M mo" Perez will sing his compositions to deliver a message of renewal and repentance. Perez's musical recollections in several parishes in Vancouver were received well last year, according to a news release. The "Yakap ng Ama, an Evening of Lenten Reflections and Acoustic Gospel Music with Fr. M mo Perez" will be held at the Calapan Cathedral in Oriental Mindoro (April 5), St. Paul of the Cross Parish in Marikina City (April 7), San Sebastian Parish in Pasig City (April 8), Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Antipolo City (April 10), and Edsa Shrine (April 12). For details, call 0919-5850575.

New commanding officer

CITY OF CALAPAN—Col. Rey Ramones has replaced Col. Raph Villanueva as commanding officer of the 204th Infantry Brigade. Ramones was the deputy commander of the Scout Ranger Regiment in Tarlac. He said he would continue the community-based programs of the brigade and further strengthen partnership with the local government. Villanueva is now the Philippine Military Academy's commandant of cadets. Local leaders and civic groups here appreciated Villanueva's approach of fostering civilian-military partnership in community development efforts.

Madonna Vitola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau



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FREE SCREENING ON:

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**Robinsons Place Imus
Robinsons Town Mall Los Baños
Robinsons Place Angeles**

**April 8, 22, 29 & May 6
(Saturday) 3pm**

**Robinsons Place Dasmariñas
Robinsons Place Novaliches**

INQUIRER Northern Luzon

Editor Jun Bandayre
Bureau Chief Rolando B. Fernandez



THE Pampanga High School building in the City of San Fernando in Pampanga is one of the many Gabaldon buildings all over the country that are now undergoing restoration to preserve their original, functional designs.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF MELVIN PATAWARAN

The 'Parthenon' gets a facelift

By Tonette Orejas
City of San Fernando, Pampanga

THESE BUILDINGS ARE called the Gabaldon. Three, perhaps more, generations of Filipinos learned the Three Rs (reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic) in what are now regarded as the "Parthenon" of the golden years of Philippine public education system.

The structures count by the thousands and are spread out all over the archipelago, with some towns or cities having two or more.

Almost a century since Assemblyman Isidro Gabaldon of Nueva Ecija in 1907 authored Act 1801 that set aside P1 million for their construction, the buildings—many of them run down by time, the elements, looting and neglect—are enjoying a restoration boom with a strong thrust for conserving the original, functional design.

Yale graduate William Parsons, the consulting architect of the Bureau of Public Works from 1905 to 1914, designed the school buildings that were later named after Assemblyman Gabaldon.

The Department of Education and the Heritage Conservation Society (HCS) are leading efforts through the heritage school building restoration program.

"Pioneering" is how architect Augusto Villalon of the HCS calls the partnership.

The idea, Villalon said in a recent column in the INQUIRER, came from former Education Secretary Armand Fabella, and was pushed by his successors, the late Br. Andrew Gonzalez FSC and Edilberto de Jesus, as well as Undersecretary Juan Miguel Luz.

The program has completed the restoration of the Rizal Elementary School in Bacolod City, the Pampanga High School in the City of San Fernando in Pampanga, and the Baguio Central School in Baguio City, according to HCS member Ivan Anthony Henares.

Up for restoration are the West Central Elementary School and its adjacent home economics building in Dagupan City, said Henares, who has created a web log or blog (gabaldon.blogspot.com) to link individuals, groups, institutions and donors to the effort.

"The sheer number of Gabaldon schools all over the country and the lack of funds to restore these buildings would not make it possible to include all in the program," he said.

Heritage resources

The buildings are "an inherent part of our country's heritage resources," he said.

Local initiatives in the restoration effort of Gabaldon buildings have started.



A FAÇADE of Romanesque Doric-like pillars like the Parthenon.

'It's a mere one-story affair, but I looked at it with awe. Its ceiling is high ... I thought giants walked through its corridors'

In Naga City, for example, Councilor Lourdes Asence has authored a proposed ordinance that seeks to create a task force for the preservation and restoration of all historical structures, including six Gabaldon buildings in that city and in Camarines Sur.

In Bohol, the provincial government spent P2.5 million in 2004 to repair some of its Gabaldon buildings.

In their respective websites, historians in Infanta, Quezon, and in Leganes, Iloilo, have cited the history of their towns' Gabaldon buildings and their impact on the people's education.

Party-list Rep. Florencio Noel (An Waray) has filed House Bill No. 4392 proposing the rehabilitation and repair of Gabaldon school houses nationwide to "preserve their historical significance and to address the need for more school buildings."

History

Some have indeed etched their place in history.

For instance, the Gabaldon building in Dagupan became a temporary residence of American Gen. Douglas MacArthur during World War II, according to Carmen Pneto, chair of the city's heritage commission.

Others served as hospitals, town

halls or evacuation centers in times of war and calamities.

More importantly, it was in the rooms, libraries and wide grounds of the Gabaldon buildings that American and Filipino educators helped unlock the potentials of students, many of them poor.

The Pampanga High School, for one, nurtured many of the country's leaders like the late President Diosdado Macapagal (Class 1929).

But perhaps one of the most poignant memories of the Gabaldon and a vivid description of the edifice comes from one who passed through its halls.

Former Quezon Board Member Francisco "Sonny" Pulgar, in his website, said that as a student, he was a habitué of the "Gusaling Gabaldon" or "Bagong Iskul," the elementary school in his hometown of Calauag.

"For me, Gabaldon was the biggest edifice I had ever seen and played on," he said.

"True, it is not a multistory structure; in fact, it's a mere one-story affair, but I looked at it with awe. Its ceiling was high, about five meters. I thought giants walked through the corridors of Gabaldon. It had a long five-tread flight of stairs leading to its elevated portico, which we used as stage on special occasions," he said.

The Gabaldon's center rooms were divided by a collapsible wood partition that could be folded and converted into a pavilion, he said.

"Gabaldon's windows were huge .. The windows were sashed and made of latticed *capis-tagawayan*. Its façade had those Romanesque Doric-like pillars I'd seen only in pictures like the Parthenon," Pulgar said.

"Its rooms were big and wide, with *lauan* floors. Its doors were imposing and made from thick and heavy narra. It had a cavernous *silong* (basement)—home of the *kabog* (bats), *ahas tulog* (snakes), *aluphan* (centipede) and giant rats. Though it stunk in there, we used it as hiding place whenever we were late in flag rites," he said.

The Gabaldon buildings are "attuned to the tropics," Villalon noted.

Breezy and cool

"The building is breezy and cool. Being inside the restored building today proves that old-style tropical architecture is still the best for our climate," he said.

There's a practical sense to ongoing, albeit slow, efforts.

"Instead of being rendered obsolete, old structures can still be recycled for modern academic uses," Villalon said.

"By restoring classrooms, the DepEd drives home the lesson that patrimony lives and continues to be relevant to our lives. Classes in heritage classrooms provide experiential learning on patrimony with a stronger impact than textbook instruction," he said.

Republic of the Philippines
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
SEC Building, EDSA, Greenhills
Mandaluyong City

SEC CIRCULAR NO. 6
Series of 2006

TO ALL DOMESTIC STOCK CORPORATIONS

SUBJECT SUBMISSION OF GENERAL INFORMATION SHEET

The records of the Commission show that some stock corporations submit General Information Sheets (GIS) that are different from SEC FORM 100 (v.2005) form, a copy of which is attached.

The official GIS form is available for downloading at the SEC website (sec.gov.ph) or from any of the Commission's offices.

Starting April 1, 2006, only filings that conform to the format of the official GIS form shall be accepted by the Commission. Filings that deviate from this form shall be considered as non-compliant with existing rules and regulations.

Mandaluyong City, Philippines
March 23, 2006

Fe B. Barin
FE B. BARIN
Chairperson

GENERAL INFORMATION SHEET

1. Name of the Corporation

2. Date of Incorporation

3. Principal Office

4. Nature of Business

5. Capitalization

6. Officers and Directors

7. Financial Statements

8. Other Information

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Dasol mangroves breathe life anew

By Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes
Dasol, Pangasinan

WHEN THE FIRST seedling was planted to reforest a decimated mangrove forest in the bosom of the Dasol Bay in Pangasinan last week, residents heaved a collective sigh of relief.

"We have not given up on our dream that the mangrove forest will still return to its original state. This is the answer to our prayers," Rafael Baraan said.

It was Baraan and the late Ramon Licalde who waged a campaign to stop the gradual clearing of the virgin mangrove forest—a rich source of fish, crustaceans and fingerlings for residents—starting in 1988. The trees were cut when local officials decided to convert the area into fishponds.

Baraan and Licalde then sought the residents' signatures for a petition asking local officials to stop the destruction of the mangrove forest. They went to government agencies in the town, but they were met with indifference.

Soon, century-old mangroves in more than 100 hectares of land were felled.

Before he died in 1995, Licalde asked his fellow residents to exert efforts to bring the mangrove area back to its original state.

He got his wish, 18 years after the first tree was cut. On March 21, people of Barangays Amalbalan and Galsigue planted seedlings that would replace the mangroves cut in 1988.

Joint undertaking

It was the start of the Multi-Partnership Mangrove Rehabilitation of Dasol Bay, a joint undertaking of the municipal government, Tanggol Kalikasan and the Foundation of the

Philippine Environment (FPE). Ava Sharon Batay-an, director of the Tanggol Kalikasan-Northern Luzon, said the FPE funded the project with a counterpart amount from Altria Funds, an international agency.

"The project complements the initiative of the town in saving the estimated 60 hectares of mangroves and restoring 50 hectares of degraded mangrove areas along the bay through rehabilitation," Batay-an said.

This year, she said, the project aimed to reforest 10 hectares of mangrove area. "We hope to expand the project to Infanta and [other parts of] Dasol [in] the coming years."

Planted were the species of *bakawan babae* (*Rhizophora mucronata*), *bakawan lalaki* (*Rhizophora apiculata*), *bakawan dala* (*Rhizophora stylata*), *sonneratia* and *avicennia*.

These species can withstand heavy rains and big waves, Batay-an said.

House opposition names 50 lawmakers vs Cha-cha

By Norman Bordadora

CHALLENGED TO SHOW THAT IT HAD the numbers necessary to kill Charter change, the House minority yesterday disclosed the names of the 50 lawmakers who had signed their intent to do so.

House Minority Leader Francis Escudero of Sorsogon told reporters that their 36-member bloc would file today the resolution opposing the convening of Congress into a constituent assembly (con-ass) via a three-fourths vote of all members of the

two chambers voting together, as proposed by Speaker Jose de Venecia himself.

"Since [the majority] expressed doubt that we have the 50 signatures, we want them to know that we do have the 50. We may even surpass that number with two more congressmen waiting to sign," Escudero said at a news conference.

On Escudero's list were 16 majority congressmen, including Deputy Majority Leader Crispin Remulla of Cavite.

One minority member, Negros Occidental Rep. Jacinto Paras, did not sign.

Another, Zamboanga City Rep. Erico Fabian, said he would sign but had yet to do so as of yesterday afternoon.

Signatories

Those who signed the minority resolution were Escudero, Darlene Antonino-Custodio, Teofisto Guingona III, Joel Villanueva, Crispin Beltran, Agapito Aquino, Benzenig Dilangalen, Emilio Abaya, Alfonso Umali;

Teodoro Casilo, Satur Ocampo, Ruy Elias Lopez, Luis Asistio, Ronaldo Zamora, Joel Virador, Dina Abad, Vincent

Crisologo, Mujiv Hataman, Mario Aguja, Risa Baraquel, Benigno Aquino III, Rolito Golez, Gilbert Remulla,

Ruffino Biazon, Oscar Malapitan, Liza Maza, Renato Magtubo, Rodolfo Plaza, Alan Peter Cayetano, Benjamin Aguirre, Justin Chipeco, Lorenzo Baniada III, Herlando Mandanas, Nereus Acosta, Inee Marcos; Florencio Noel, Rolox Suplico, Antonio Serapio, Robert Jaworski Jr., Crispin Remulla, Joseph Santiago, Jack Enrile, Loretta Ann Rosales, Clavel Martinez,

Juan Edgardo Angara, Manuel Mamba, Rodolfo Bacani, Proceso Alcala, Cynthia Villar and Rafael Mariano.

De Venecia, however, remained confident the Cha-cha train he had started would continue to roll despite the 50 signatures presented by Escudero.

"Eleven of that number are withdrawing. And from our 180 [for Cha-cha], three are withdrawing," De Venecia said.

He expressed confidence that Cha-cha adherents in Congress in the end will have their way.



A COALITION of over 100 people's organizations and other sectoral groups had solicited over 4.5-million signatures, according to lawyer Raul Lambino (center), to push for a people's initiative for Charter change.

Comelec split on Charter change

From page A1

voters, of which every legislative district must be represented by at least 3 percent of the registered voters therein.

He said there was no need for anyone to bribe local election officials to verify the signatures.

He challenged those claiming that they had been bribed or forced to verify the signatures to file a case in court.

Abalos said the Comelec's law department officials and regional directors reached the agreement on verification at a meeting the other day.

"It was settled that the signature drive and verification were not part of the petition proper but part of the initiatory steps leading to it. What we will be doing is help ensure that the process is correct," he said.

Abalos also said the Comelec's actions would "speed up the work," if the petition were entertained.

Asked if a budget had been provided for the activity, he said the verification of signatures was part of the Comelec's administrative function.

"We do signature verification for recall elections as well. This is a similar situation," he said.

No recourse but dismissal

According to Brawner, the Comelec, if asked to rule on a petition for amending the Constitution through a people's initiative, would always be "guided" by the March 1997 ruling of the Supreme Court.

"The case says that the Comelec is prohibited from giving cognizance [to] or entertaining cases," he said in reply to a question by House Majority Leader Prospero Pichay at the CA hearing at the Senate.

"If a petition of this sort reaches the Comelec, we have no choice but to comply with the jurisprudence," he said. "As soon as a petition is filed, we have no recourse but to dismiss the petition."

Thus, he added, anybody who would be "adversely affected" by a future Comelec resolution of this nature "would have to go to the Supreme Court."

Brawner, 70, whose appointment was recommended to the plenary, backed Senate President Franklin Drilon's earlier aired view that any petition of this nature should be dismissed outright by the Comelec in the absence of an enabling law.

"For the Comelec to rule on a petition would be a grave abuse of discretion," Drilon had said in an interview.

Abalos declared on Monday that his office was ready to begin verifying the millions of signatures that people's initiative advocates had collected.

4.5M signatures

In a statement, Sigaw ng Bayan, which described itself as "a loose but broad coalition of over 100 people's organizations, nongovernment organizations and other sectoral groups" yesterday said that as of Monday, local groups had gathered over 4.5 million signatures to push a people's initiative, "with millions more expected in the days ahead."

When pressed by Pichay for his personal view on the lack of an enabling law, Brawner said: "I beg not to say anything on that because a case might be filed in court or even the Comelec. That [is] the issue that will be raised."

"We have to really follow the dictates of the jurisprudence."

Brawner also said the Comelec had "no personality" to elevate any petition to the high court. He said that the poll body would "only act" on any petition presented before it, and that "it's up to anybody adversely affected to go to the Supreme Court."

He voiced the hope that the high court would eventually resolve the issue "once and for all," and noted the close vote of justices that led to the March 1997 ruling on the people's initiative.

Information drive

Reacting to reports that money was being offered in exchange for signatures, particularly in the provinces, Vice President Noli de Castro said the proponents of the people's initiative should conduct an information campaign on the proposed amendments so the people would fully understand the issues.

"The right of the people to undertake initiatives to propose specific amendments to the Constitution is guaranteed in the Constitution itself, subject to the provisions of the enabling law," De Castro said, adding:

"We should not waste our opportunity to amend and revise our Constitution. And for a comprehensive review and revision of our Charter, there is a need for greater information and discussion in the grass-roots level,

especially on the issues of the proposed shift from the presidential to parliamentary form of government, and the accompanying transitional provisions."

De Castro said the country would move forward if the people were properly informed and enlightened on the issues involved in decision-making.

Alternative centers

The militant Bagong Aiyansang Makabayang and allied groups called on the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines to open parish doors for the education of the public on the government's supposed motives in amending the Charter.

"Make them alternative centers where people can really know what is behind the Cha-cha moves of the administration. These centers can also gather signatures and amplify the people's opposition," said Bayan secretary general Renato Reyes.

According to Reyes, the CBCP's moral influence is very much needed because President Macapagal-Arroyo is "hell-bent on pushing Charter change despite serious legal and moral questions."

"The administration is trying to co-opt the barangays. Hopefully they will not be able to co-opt the parishes," Reyes said.

A number of Catholic bishops had earlier expressed reservations about Charter change.

Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales had said that the problem lay more in the character of the people serving in the government, not in the Constitution itself.

"The CBCP has been consistent in its position. We hope that it could link up with people's organizations, especially in the communities, for this common effort of frustrating Ms Arroyo's Charter change drive," Reyes said.

Bayan is involved in the People's Movement Against Arroyo's Charter Change (People's March), a multisectoral group composed of lawyers, members of the academe, environmentalists, Church people and other sectors.

Let process take its course

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye urged politicians opposed to the signature drive to allow the "democratic process" to take its course.

"Instead of continuing the destructive politicking on the issue of the people's initiative, we suggest that our politicians let the process roll on its natural course and let the people decide if indeed there is popular support for substantive changes in our Constitution," Bunye told reporters.

"The more they try to demean this effort of the people, [the more they] show their insecurity," he said.

Bunye said Malacañang had allowed the drive to "run its course without interference."

He expressed the Palace's elation over people "responding to the call for transformation and change."

Michael Defensor, Ms Arroyo's chief of staff, said the people's "hearts and minds" were now open to joining the Charter change discussions instead of leaving the matter to the politicians.

"In the past months, we have seen a coup plot and destabilization efforts, and I think many people are convinced that in order to have stability and respond to many of our problems today, we have to [institutionalize] the reforms needed," he said.

Defensor called on those critical of Charter change to take part in the debate and in instituting political reforms.

"By continuing to limit themselves to politicking and trying to muddle the issue of Charter change, this also becomes a disservice to the people," he told reporters in a briefing.

'Insult'

Both Defensor and Bunye denied the opposition's claim that fraud and manipulation had marked the signature drive.

Defensor said it was an "insult" to the residents of his district in Quezon City for one to say that they took part in the signature drive without understanding Charter change.

Bunye said such accusations were "unfounded and farfetched."

And while the Palace reiterated that it had no direct involvement in the signature drive, it reiterated Ms Arroyo's full support for Charter change.

"What we can say is right from the start, the President [has been] straightforward and very open ... that she is in favor of changing the Constitution. And during her State of the Nation address [last year], she even specified the preferred manner of changing the Constitution [and that is through a constituent assembly]," Bunye said. With reports from Cynthia D. Balana, Christian V. Esguerra and Christine O. Avendano

The 3-percent rule: JDV declares victory

By Michael Lim Ubac

A SINGLE LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT failing to gather the required 3 percent of its registered voters to support a people's initiative to revise the Charter will "nullify the entire process," Speaker Jose de Venecia said late yesterday.

But even before the signatures backing Charter change could be validated, the Speaker declared victory, saying "almost all districts have exceeded the 3-percent constitutional requirement for a people's initiative."

At a press conference, De Venecia said the House had received "overwhelming support" for the administration-backed signature campaign.

"They're reporting an average of 15-25 percent [of the signatures in most districts], some are higher. So by the time the reports are completed, we will be way, way way in excess of the minimum constitutional requirement of 12 percent of the national average," he said.

He claimed that no district

had reported "results of less than 3 percent."

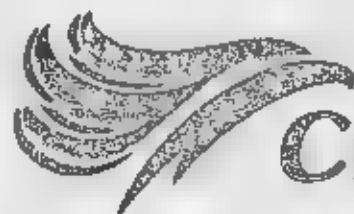
De Venecia said the House majority had to support the signature campaign amid the Senate's adamant stand against Charter change.

"We would prefer the constituent assembly route but, unfortunately, senators have said they [would] knock it down by insisting that the voting should be done separately," said De Venecia.

He said the Constitution was "clear" in saying that revising the fundamental law entailed three-fourths of "all the members of Congress."

De Venecia said the failure of both chambers to see eye to eye on the mode of revising the Charter had forced the people to take "direct action."

"This is now what Filipinos themselves are doing—by direct action of the people—because of the gridlock and the constant tension and crises that had even led to destabilization and impeachment and coup attempts and Edsa I, II, IV and V," he said.



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Separate findings, no closure

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES inquiry has resulted in two "Hello Garci" reports, separate findings, no closure.

At dusk yesterday, the majority and minority blocs came up with separate committee reports on the wiretapping scandal that nearly unseated President Macapagal-Arroyo last year.

It was the majority bloc represented by chairs of the five House committees that first handed its report to Speaker Jose de Venecia.

De Venecia congratulated the chairs led by Rep. Emmaylou Talino-Santos for "their wisdom and dedication to duty."

The minority report penned by Cavite Rep. Gilbert Remulla highlighted the futility of the search for truth behind an opposition allegation that the recordings showed that Ms Arroyo

phoned Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano to boost her chances of winning the 2004 presidential race.

"It's likewise undeniable that the Arroyo government, in general, has shown utter disregard, if not disrespect, towards the inquiry. Though members of the administration appeared during the public hearings, nothing substantial was presented to help ferret out the truth," said the minority report.

Lost opportunity

The report said that the 14 public hearings could have "finally" been the moment for Congress to address the lingering problem of election cheating, but with the way the witnesses conducted themselves, the opportunity was lost.

The minority report would be "appended" to the main report, said Santos.

As expected, there was nothing new in the majority's findings and recommendations.

The main report did not deviate from the revised draft report it routed to committee members on March 13, which admitted the failure of the joint congressional inquiry to unravel the mystery of the political controversy.

The report said that the hearings "only raised more issues and answered none," thus Congress should "continue to seek the answers... and in particular subpoena phone records to establish the likelihood or unlikelihood that alleged wiretapping conversations could have taken place."

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Cite in contempt

In plenary session, Remulla asked that Garcillano, along with his lawyer, Eddie Tamondong, be cited in contempt for claiming he did not leave the country on July 14, 2005, contrary to a note verbale issued by the Singaporean Embassy.

Remulla also cited a certification issued by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas last March 20 that one of the two passports Garcillano submitted to the joint committee was defective.

Upon Remulla's persistent request, the joint committee asked BSP which prints all blank passports for the Department of Foreign Affairs, to examine the passports last February.

The certification showed that Garcillano's second passport (No. JJ243816) issued to him in 2002 did not conform to standard on six counts. However, the previous passport (No. BB602533), which he also submitted to the joint inquiry, "conforms to standard."

House insulted

Remulla said the House leadership should take a "strong action" against Garcillano and Tamondong who, he said, went on television accusing the joint committee of tampering with the passport.

"What should we do? (They) insulted us outright. Is this how we defend the institutional pride and dignity of the chamber?" asked Remulla.

He said the two caused him "personal injury."

The majority, however, prevailed upon Remulla to withhold temporarily the motion seeking to cite the two in contempt pending action of the plenary on the two committee reports.

BSP did not say passport fake

Rep. Prospero Pichay said the BSP findings did not say the passport was fake.

"It did not say that. It only said some of the features did not conform to standard. The BSP is not the authority when it comes to

ascertaining authenticity of passports," said Pichay.

The inquiry was mounted following the release in June last year of wiretapped phone conversations purportedly between President Arroyo and Garcillano.

The opposition said the recordings were evidence that Ms Arroyo cheated in the May 2004 elections. The President has denied the allegations and in September last year, her dominant allies in the House killed an impeachment attempt against her that stemmed from disclosures in the wiretaps.

Last November, the House probers released a draft report on their hearings accusing Malacañang of cover-up. Ms. Arroyo's allies blocked the report and instead demanded that the episode highlighted an opposition attempt to unseat the 58-year-old President.

Abu Sayyaf blamed for deadly Jolo bombing

From page A1

office released yesterday a list of the nine fatalities, including a 2-year-old girl. Twenty others were wounded in the attack—the second in Jolo this year. A man was killed in a blast at a videoke bar last month. (See list of fatalities below.)

Senior Supt. Ahirum Ajirim, provincial police director, described the blast as being "very powerful" that it tore away half of the store building.

Device used by Abu

He said investigation showed the blast was caused by a homemade bomb packed with ammonium nitrate and detonated by a cell phone hooked to a timer. It was probably hidden in the baggage counter, he said. This type of explosive had been used before by the Abu Sayyaf, he said.

There was also a letter sent to the store, run by Catholic Marists, seeking an unspecified amount of money, said Brig. Gen. Alexander Aleo, commander of the military-led antiterrorism Task Force Comet. It was signed Abu Abdul Gaw, the nom de guerre of Ismin Sahiron, son of Abu Sayyaf leader Radulan Sahiron.

Warning

The letter, which was left at a nearby pharmacy, told the store management of the impending attack that would serve as a warning to those who ignored the group's demands. Two mobile phone numbers were provided.

"There was no particular amount, but they were demanding something and it stated there that the Abu Sayyaf was willing to negotiate," Aleo said.

The device and the letter showed that the bombing was masterminded by the Abu Sayyaf, said Aleo.

Marines cause tension

Ajirim said a man earlier reported as having been detained following the blast was identified as a Marine and was released after police found no evidence to link him to the incident.

The INQUIRER learned that prior to the release of the Marine, a near shoot-out between his unit and the local police occurred.

The tension started when Marines, on two 6 x 6 trucks and an armored personnel carrier, went to the Jolo police station and at gunpoint demanded their colleague's release. Tension was defused and the Marine was freed, according to Mayor Alkramer Izquierdo.

Like savages

Izquierdo said he was unhappy with the incident. "If the suspect is a member of the military, then shall we let him go free? It should be a big no, there should be due process," Izquierdo said.

"It was an insult to us and to the entire police organization because they did not respect the rule of law for acting like savages at the height of our sorrow," he said.

But Col. Juancho Sabban, commander of the 3rd Marine Brigade, said the arrest of the Marine was uncalled for. "My operative was there at the scene to get pictures and information on the blast. Yes, he was bringing a VHF radio that was supposed to be for repair. Did the police know that the triggering device was a cell phone and not a dead VHF radio?" Sabban said.

Ajirim said the Marine was invited for questioning only because he did not have an identification card when he was accosted for carrying a handgun.

Fatalities

Killed on Monday were Nasser Hadjirul of Barangay Martirez; Jesus Cabrera of Barangay Kasalamatan; Titing Nasesa and Marivic Manuel, 40, of Habena village; Masser Saibuddin, head teacher of Tongkil Elementary School in Tongkil town; Mocarsa Abduharim, 18, of Camp Andres, Luuk town; Babygirl Sahupa, 2, of Indanan; Al Kissae of Pangutaran, and a woman who was burned beyond recognition. With reports from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr., Michael Lim Ubac, Dona Z. Pusibugan and Luige A. del Puerto

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ESTRADA sworn in as defense witness during his trip to the witness stand.

Erap returns to stand today, nixes clemency

By Nelson F. Flores

FORMER PRESIDENT JOSEPH ESTRADA IS EXPECTED TO RE-but charges he received protection money from *jueteng* lords when he takes the witness stand again today at the resumption of his five-year-old plunder trial, one of his lawyers said yesterday.

Former Manila City Prosecutor Jose Flaminiano said Estrada would prove that he did not receive any bribe money from *jueteng*, an illegal numbers game, as alleged by Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson.

In his testimony last week, the 68-year-old Estrada also denied Singson's allegations that the former actor-turned-President had received P130 million in kickbacks from tobacco excise taxes in Ilocos Sur.

Flaminiano, who is conducting Estrada's direct examination, said that aside from rebutting the alleged tax kickbacks and gambling payoffs, Estrada's testimony would also touch on the former President's alleged secret bank account and his alleged attempt to intervene in the stock market to favor a company owned by his friend Dante Tan.

The Estrada camp yesterday also rejected talk of clemency for the toppled leader.

Former Maguindanao Rep. Didagen Dilangalen, a spokesman for Estrada, said clemency was not at all being discussed within the former president's circle because they believed he would be acquitted.

Prosecution's case weak

"How can we talk of clemency when we are all one in our assessment that the prosecution's case is inherently weak?" Dilangalen said. "These are trumped-up and politically motivated charges that would not stand up to the court's scrutiny."

Aside from impeaching the testimonies of prosecution witnesses such as Singson on the plunder and perjury charges, Estrada also seeks to prove that he was illegally removed from power through a conspiracy among civil society groups, the Left and the Right, thus depriving him prematurely of immunity from suit.

The former President will also show how he had been offered immunity from suit in exchange for agreeing to go into exile abroad and how he had become a victim of "selective prosecution," Flaminiano added.

Meanwhile, Sandiganbayan Sheriff Ed Urieta said security would remain tight today at the anti-graft court's compound.

He said the court had requested assistance from the Quezon City Police District as Estrada's supporters were expected to stage demonstrations in front of the Sandiganbayan building.

As in last week's hearing, no live radio or television coverage would be allowed from within the courtroom during the hearing, Urieta said. This time, the court will not allow still photographers inside the courtroom, he added.

Photographers not allowed

"We will not allow pictures to be taken inside the courtroom," Urieta said in Filipino. "It's unwieldy. Two people were injured last week because it was unruly."

According to Dilangalen, talk of clemency for the former President was part of the Arroyo administration's diversionary tactics to cover up the weakness of the prosecution's case particularly in light of recent surveys showing Estrada had higher approval ratings than President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"Even if you trace all these talks of reconciliation over the past five years, you will see that President Estrada never once entertained any of these offers because he is committed to only one thing: proving his innocence before an honorable court and regaining his honor and freedom through legal processes," Dilangalen said.

Memorandum Circular No. 155 dated Nov. 17, 2004 granting clemency to convicts aged 70 and above on humanitarian grounds would not apply to Estrada's case, Dilangalen added.

"As far as we are concerned, that circular covers only those who have been convicted of a crime and we believe President Estrada will be acquitted because there is absolutely no evidence against him that would warrant his conviction," he said.

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Editor Ester G. Ditasupit

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PCSO execs, 11 others in STL charged

By DJ Yap

DAYS AFTER THE RAID ON FOUR SMALL Town Lottery (STL) outlets in Quezon City, the police filed charges against officials of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office and Benchmark Acquisition International Corp., the STL franchise holder in the city.

Charged with illegal gambling in the QC Prosecutor's Office on Monday were PCSO assistant general manager for lottery Conrado Zaballa, regional manager Adonis Curato, and Benchmark president and general manager Joie Atienza.

Also charged were Benchmark chief executive officer Alvin Atienza, assistant operations manager Prospero Atienza, and eight other employees.

The Quezon City police District Intelligence and Investigation Division accused the 13 of violating Presidential Decree 1602, or the Anti-Illegal Gambling Act, and city ordinance SP-91, series of 1993, or operating without a business permit.

The STL is a project of the PCSO that is supposed to replace the illegal numbers game "jueteng." According to a Department of Interior and Local Government official, Malacanang has allowed the PCSO to conduct STL test runs for a year.

Mayor's permit

Interior Assistant Secretary Bryan Yamsuan, however, said that if the STL outlets were operating without a mayor's permit, the police could make arrests.

According to the charge sheet signed by Supt. Roger James Brillantes, DIED chief, the 13 engaged in illegal gambling activities when they conducted a test run of the game on March 25.

The police said they had conducted surveillance operations on the STL outlets after Mayor Feliciano Belmonte Jr. ordered all STL operations in the city stopped.

Last Saturday, police raided the STL head office at Unit 109, Prima Building on East Avenue, and three other outlets. They also arrested more than 60 collectors and operators.

The police seized a computer set, three telephones, a steel cabinet with PCSO markings, a set of drawing numbers and other gambling paraphernalia.

Prerogative

Benchmark lawyer Arnold Bayobay said he has not yet received a copy of the charges but added that the company "welcomed" the opportunity to present their side in a regular proceeding. "It's the prerogative of the apprehending officers to file subsequent cases," he said. Earlier, he said Benchmark would stop its operations temporarily until it has the necessary mayor's and business permits.

Meanwhile, Sen. Manuel Villar yesterday said that reviving STL operations would not stop jueteng. Villar, chairman of the Senate committee on public order and illegal drugs, said in a statement that STL was not the solution to jueteng since it also promotes "the culture of gambling."

STL was first introduced during the Aquino administration but it proved "no match for jueteng's popularity and bigger prize money," he added.

A former big-time jueteng operator, on the other hand, said that STL would end up being run by the same people involved in the illegal numbers game. "The kings of jueteng will also be the kings of STL," Wilfredo "Boy" Mayor told the INQUIRER. With Philip C. Tuleza and Christian V. Esguerra

Deadly fight over children

IT STARTED WITH A PETTY FIGHT BETWEEN two children.

But neighbors were surprised to find out that the fight eventually led to the death of Dimawan Antonio and his partner, Daisy, who were found dead of stab wounds inside their house at Multinational Village, Barangay Moonwalk, Parañaque City.

SP03 Bernardo Mendoza, homicide investigator, said the suspect in the killings, Domingo Dabu, was identified by the couple's nine-year-old daughter who witnessed the killing. Dabu, however, escaped before the police arrived.

Clemente Advincula, the barangay chair, said an old grudge could be the motive behind the killing. "A fight between their children developed into a feud between the two couples," said Advincula. Jocelyn R. Uy

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Firm staves off power cutoff via SC appeal

By Abigail L. Ho

SUPREME COURT RULING may lead to the cutting of power to vital installations in the southern part of Metro Manila, including Makati, the country's financial center.

In a briefing yesterday, National Transmission Corp. (Transco) president and chief executive Alan Ortiz said the company will appeal the recent Supreme Court ruling stopping the firm from energizing and transmitting high-voltage electric current through

the Sucat-Araneta-Baintawak transmission lines.

The high tribunal upheld the decision handed down by a Makati Regional Trial Court in 2000 preventing the National Power Corp. from sending power to its cables from Sucat in Parañaque to Araneta Ave. in Quezon City.

The lower court's ruling was based on a petition filed by residents of Dasmarinas Village in Makati which had opposed the transmission line project because of health concerns.

In its decision, the Supreme Court said there was enough evidence that the power lines could be endangering the health and safety of residents in the area where the lines pass through.

Crucial line

"When the Supreme Court denies our appeal and says we have to shut down the line, we will appeal again and again," Ortiz said. The power network was a "crucial" line and could not be turned off just like that, he added.

"The Sucat-Araneta line is the

main artery, so this is a crucial line. We cannot just turn it off because this would be a disadvantage to millions of consumers who rely on electricity for their daily livelihood," Ortiz said.

Should the network be shut down, it would affect power supply to vital installations such as the Edsa Metro Rail Transit 3 (MRT-3) the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, as well as the Makati Central Business District.

"Hopefully, more enlightened parties would give us more breathing space to maintain the

line. Clearly, to cut is not an immediate option, since all communities linked to the line will have no electricity, including the MRT and Naia," he said.

He added that it would take Transco between 12 and 18 months to work on diverting the power from the Sucat-Araneta-Baintawak line.

Since Transco had not yet been created when the Makati RTC issued its decision regarding the Sucat-Araneta-Baintawak line in 2000, Napocor would have to be the one to make an appeal.

In October last year, a power outage lasting close to two hours hit certain areas in the south as well as the province of Laguna when Transco encountered problems in the Sucat-Araneta line.

Brownouts

The affected areas included Makati, Pasay, Taguig, Mandaluyong, Las Piñas, Parañaque and Laguna. The Naia domestic and international terminals as well as the Centennial Terminal and MRT-3 operations all suffered power interruptions.



CANDLE LIGHTING CEREMONY

LOCAL government officials, representatives from Greenpeace, nongovernment organizations and residents of three towns in Quezon severely affected by flash floods in 2004 gathered recently at the Bantayog ng mga Bayani in Quezon Avenue. They lit 1,500 candles laid out on the ground in the shape of a tree in memory of the thousands of victims of disasters caused by illegal logging.

JOSE ENRIQUE SORIANO

Forest by the bay

By Tina G. Santos

PROMENADERS WHO FREQUENT THE CULTURAL Center of the Philippines (CCP) grounds at the boundary of Pasay and Manila may be glad to know that an urban forest will soon be developed in the area.

Regina Paterno, president of Winner Foundation, said a lightly-wooded area on the CCP grounds along Roxas Boulevard will be transformed into an ecological showcase.

The urban forest, which would be called "Lwasang Kalikasan," will be inaugurated during the Earth Day celebration next month.

"It will also be a venue for cultural and educational activities," Paterno told INQUIRER.

The urban forest is a project of the CCP, Winner and other environmental advocate groups like Haribon Foundation, the Lasallian Institute for the Environment and the Philippine Tropical Forest Conservation Foundation.

Paterno said they decided to nurture another forest to provide a respite for city dwellers from pressures that make life in the city so stressful.

"We would like to provide a restful area for enjoying nature, one of the few locations in the city where the spirit can be recharged. We feel that each city should have an urban forest to fight off pollution," Paterno added.

Winner Foundation is the caretaker of the Arroceros Forest Park, just beside the Pasig River. The foundation, however, is embroiled in a court case with the Manila City government which is constructing a building for teachers inside the park.

METROBRIEFS

Makati's newest residents



ILLUSTRATIONS: ANTHONY MISTADES

the city government's thrust of protecting the environment and wildlife for posterity and enjoyment of the coming generations." Mayor Jejomar Binay said in a statement. Makati Information and Community Relations Department chief Joey Salgado said herons were part of the city's landscape when Makati was still an undeveloped swamp prior to the Spanish colonization in the 16th century. The city recently became a protected area for birds after the city council passed an ordinance that declared Makati a bird sanctuary.

Tarra V. Quismundo

Cop killed on the job

A POLICEMAN was stabbed and shot dead while trying to arrest an armed suspect in Manila last Monday. PO1 Randy Adovas, 29, assigned at the Philippine National Police Regional Special Action Unit (PNP-RSAU) at Camp Bagong Diwa, Taguig City, died of several gunshot and stab wounds. Suspect Joseph Asilan, an employee of Transworld Brokerage Corp. and a resident of Area A Camarin Compound, Caloocan City, was arrested shortly after the incident. SPO2 Wilam Gondranos of the Manila Police District Homicide Section said Adovas had at-

tempted to arrest a still unidentified suspect for illegal possession of a deadly weapon, a 29-inch knife. Asilan, however, stabbed the victim while the other suspect grabbed the policeman's service firearm and shot him several times. Gondranos said the police were tracking the whereabouts of the other suspect. Margaux C. Ortiz

Parents, watch your kids

PARAÑAQUE policemen yesterday asked parents to keep an eye on their children following the recovery of a four-year-old boy from a suspected kidnapper on Monday. "We are asking all parents to always check on their kids especially when they are playing outside," said city police chief Supt. Ronald Estilios. Estilios added that a new kidnapping syndicate has been targeting children aged four to six in Metro Manila. The gang, he said, reportedly sell their victims as organ donors for at least P10,000. Police arrested Ruben Basario after he allegedly kidnapped a boy in Barangay San Martin de Porres in Upper Bicutan. PNP SAs Estilios said Basario could be a member of the syndicate. "We are still conducting further investigation on the suspect," Estilios told the INQUIRER yesterday. Jocelyn R. Uy



One-woman art show

ARTIST Gracia de Leon-mago has captured the ephemeral beauty of butterflies on canvas in her ongoing exhibit at the National Telecommunications Commission building on BIR Road, East Triangle, Diliman, Quezon City. Aptly titled "Butterfly Series," this one-woman show is open to the public from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The exhibit ends tomorrow.

Abu Sayyaf kin to sue PNP

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE FAMILIES OF SLAIN ABU Sayyaf suspects killed during the Bicutan jail siege last year are set to file criminal charges against police officials behind the bloody assault.

Ren Jaaludin Ropeta, vice chair of the Moro-Christian Peoples' Alliance (MCPA) said they are now forming a legal committee, together with human rights groups, to assist families of the victims in pursuing criminal and administrative cases against members of the Philippine National Police who led in the assault on the Metro Manila District Jail in Camp Bagong Diwa, Taguig City, on March 15, 2005.

Former Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes, former PNP Chief Edgar Aglipay and Chief Director General Arturo Lomibao will be among those charged, Ropeta said.

Response

Twenty-three inmates, including three top leaders of the Abu Sayyaf bandit group, were killed during the siege.

A Commission on Human Rights (CHR) report on the incident said that the PNP's response to the attempted jail-

break resulted in the killing of inmates who were not part of the escape try.

The report also recommended the filing of criminal charges against the officials involved in the incident.

"Though it has taken the CHR too long to finalize its investigation, we are nevertheless glad that it stood for the truth and heeded the pleas for justice of the bereaved families of the unjustly slain Moro detainees," Ropeta said.

Hard to take

Hadji Idris Mactar, whose husband, Abu-Khayr Mactar and father, Ahmad Upao were killed during the assault, will be the primary complainant.

"My father and husband were both innocent. They were not part of the jailbreak. Their unjust killing was hard to take," she said.

Witnesses had said that Upao, a 75-year-old bedridden detainee suffering from Alzheimer's disease, survived the assault.

But he was allegedly shot by the police as he was being moved by inmates to the second floor of the jail facility.

MCPA members who visited the 120 Muslim detainees at Camp Bagong Diwa last week said they

were also dismayed over the detainees' "poor" conditions inside the jail.

Some of the inmates who were hurt during the siege have not been given medical treatment until now, May Vargas, MCPA information officer told the INQUIRER.

"They need to undergo surgery, but jail officials said they lack the funds," she added.

Since the botched jailbreak and the bloody assault, the inmates were also denied their conjugal rights, Vargas said.

The discriminatory treatment against the detainees has persisted for a year, Ropeta said.

"They have been subjected to worse detention conditions, worse even than the conditions at the maximum security prison in Muntinlupa," he added.

Appeal

He added that the Department of Interior and Local Government should recognize the inmates' appeal for humane treatment to avoid further violation of human rights.

On the other hand, jail authorities have allowed the inmates to hold prayers and religious discussions, a privilege which had been stopped after the siege.

Roldan hearing postponed for 3rd time

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

FOR THE THIRD TIME THIS year, the hearing for the kidnapping case filed against actor and former Quezon City Rep. Dennis Roldan was postponed.

Roldan was about to present witnesses to support his application for bail yesterday but the prosecution objected.

The actor, whose real name is Mitchell Gumabao, is accused of masterminding the kidnapping of a three-year-old Chinese-Filipino boy in February 2005. His group allegedly demanded at least P250 million in ransom at the start of the negotiations—an allegation he had denied.

"This is just a motion for bail. The court should just decide based on the evidences and witnesses presented by the prosecution," prosecutor Philip Dela Cruz

told the INQUIRER yesterday.

He said that based on court rules, petition for bail hearings should be "summary in nature."

Purpose-defeating

If the defense was allowed to present evidence, Dela Cruz added, this would turn the hearing "into a trial on the merits, defeating the summary purpose of the bail hearing."

Sought for comment, Roldan's lawyer, Karl Arian Castillo, said they just wanted "to exercise (their) right to due process."

"We want the proceedings to be speedy—but that is not happening," Castillo added.

The charges against Roldan are not bailable. However, the actor, in his petition for bail, had said that the evidence against him was not strong.

Because of the prosecution's

objection, Pasig City Regional Trial Court Branch 261 Judge Agnes Reyes-Carpio asked the prosecution and the defense to submit a position paper on Friday.

Hearing reset

She also reset the hearing on April 11.

The prosecution has already presented at least 10 witnesses, including policemen who testified they saw Roldan in the safe houses where the boy was brought, and the boy's mother who claimed she had negotiated with Roldan for her son's release.

The defense was about to present witnesses on January 31, but Carpio failed to show up at the hearing because she was sick.

The hearing was reset on February 21, exactly a year after Roldan was arrested in his house in Quezon City. But the lawyer of

accused Noel San Andres, who was to testify in Roldan's favor, came late and after Carpio had already suspended the hearing due to his absence. Carpio also took a one-month mandatory leave which ended last week.

Prosecution scared?

"Maybe the prosecution is just afraid (of my client's testimony)," lawyer Dodge Encinas, lawyer of accused San Andres, said.

Roldan, San Andres and his wife Rowena, Romeo Orcajada and Adrian Domingo are detained at the Pasig City Jail while accused Octavio Garces is detained at the Philippine National Police Custodial Service.

Alberto Pagdanganan had turned state witness while accused Suzette Wang, Roldan's alleged girlfriend and fellow mastermind, has remained at large.



NATURE'S BEAUTIES

A trio of beauty queens visited the INQUIRER yesterday. Arelina Villanueva (Miss Philippines Water), Genebelie Raagas (Earth) and Nadia Lee Cien Dele Cruz (Air) kept cool by eating ice cream.

Vietnam to host int'l meet. on effects of Agent Orange

HANOI—VIETNAM WAS SET TO HOST AN international conference Tuesday on the effects of the Vietnam War defoliant Agent Orange, bringing together veterans and delegates from at least six countries.

Vietnamese civilians and soldiers from all sides of the conflict claim health defects from the chemical that US forces used to strip away jungle cover and destroy food crops.

Victims from Vietnam and elsewhere have been fighting for compensation from Monsanto Corp., Dow Chemical and other former producers of the toxic chemical, which was named after its orange-striped containers.

A New York court last year dismissed a Vietnamese lawsuit representing millions of victims. The Vietnamese team has launched an appeal.

"To fight and defeat the Americans in the war was difficult," professor Nguyen Trong Nhan, vice president of the Vietnam Dioxin/Agent Orange Victims Association, said. "Winning in court is even more difficult."

"Even if we have sufficient evidence about our victims, the American judges can always reject it."



VIETNAM'S alleged Agent Orange victims Le Van O (left) and Van Long.

Nhan said the two-day meeting would bring together veterans and campaigners from Vietnam, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, South Korea and Canada.

His group says that between 1961 and 1971, the US military dropped more than 100,000 tons of toxic chemicals on southern Vietnam, exposing anywhere between 2.1 million and 4.8 million people.



STARTING THEM YOUNG

Eight-month-old baby enjoying a dive in Athens March 27. Doctors say that swimming can help babies' circulatory and respiratory systems, assist in strengthening their muscles and improving their posture.

US immigration bill advances as protests spread

WASHINGTON—AN IMMIGRATION reform bill that would create a guest worker program pushed by President George W. Bush won approval on Monday from a US Senate panel against a backdrop of noisy and emotional protests in Los Angeles, San Francisco and Detroit.

The Senate is struggling to enact compromise legislation to better secure America's borders while offering millions a chance to be in the country legally, setting up a politically bruising battle with the US House of Representatives, where the Republican

majority has come out against legal incentives.

The Senate Judiciary Committee passed the measure on a 12-6 vote. It goes to the full Senate later this week, where a heated debate is expected over the guest worker program, which critics call an amnesty for some illegal immigrants.

The committee's action came as President George W. Bush warned on Monday against fear-mongering on the divisive issue.

"No one should play on people's fears or try to pit neighbors

against each other," Bush said. "No one should pretend that immigrants are a threat to American identity, because immigrants have shaped America's identity."

Provisions of the measure that would allow some of the estimated 12 million illegal immigrants a chance to legalize their status and earn citizenship will set the stage for a bruising election-year battle with the House, where many of the Republican majority oppose incentives for illegal immigrants.

But Senate backers said it is

not an amnesty.

"A path to earned citizenship is what this bill is about," said Sen. Lindsey Graham, a South Carolina Republican who joined Massachusetts Democrat Sen. Edward Kennedy in offering the measure. He said it was "an eleven-year journey" to earn citizenship and candidates would have to pay a fine, undergo criminal background checks, learn English and pay their taxes.

Senate Judiciary Committee chair Arlen Specter, a Pennsylvania Republican, called it a "a

measured bill."

With his job approval rating at a low ebb, Bush is facing a new test of his political strength during a mid-term election year, weeks after Republicans deserted him on a controversial deal to allow an Arab company to manage six US ports.

In Los Angeles on Monday, hundreds of mostly Latino students blocked two major downtown freeways, chanting in Spanish and waving flags from Mexico and El Salvador. Traffic was snarled until police could

move the students off the road but no accidents, injuries or arrests were reported.

In Boston, more than 2000 people gathered in the city's common, waving Latin American, Caribbean and Irish flags while marching downtown and calling for urgent immigration reform.

"I'm here to support the Hispanic community," said Amicar Gonzalez, a 23-year-old illegal janitor from Guatemala. "We are not terrorists, we just want to work."

Reuters

WORLD BRIEFS

Afghanistan to free convert facing death



ABDUL Rahman

KABUL/WASHINGTON—Afghanistan will free a man who could have faced the death penalty for converting from Islam to Christianity after the West pressed Kabul for his release, a US state department spokesperson said on Monday. But the prosecutor in charge of the case and Afghan presidential officials were not available for comment. UN officials said the man was seeking asylum abroad, but a solution to the case was still some way off. The case raised a storm of protests in the West, threatening to open a rift between Afghanistan and its Western backers who called for the man's release. About 1,000 angry Afghans protested on Monday and called for the man to be executed. Abdul Rahman, 40, was jailed this month for rejecting Islam and converting to Christianity. Islamic sharia law prescribes the death penalty for apostasy—abandoning the faith. Rahman became a Christian while working for an aid group helping Afghan refugees in Pakistan 15 years ago. He later lived in Germany before returning to Afghanistan. He was detained after his relatives told authorities he had converted to Christianity, apparently for owing a dispute involving two daughters.

Reuters

France braces for strikes over youth jobs

PARIS—Hundreds of thousands of people are expected to join a national strike in France on Tuesday in a bid to force Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin to abandon a new job law that makes firing young workers easier. The standoff over the CPE First Job Contract is the toughest test to date for Villepin, who has refused to withdraw a measure which critics say will create a generation of "throwaway workers" and fail in its aim to cut high youth unemployment. The politically potent combination of demonstrations and strikes is likely to cause travel chaos for commuters, as well as air and train users, with rail workers beginning their 36-hour stoppage late on Monday. Employees from the postal service, schools and the media, among others, are expected to join the strike, which has been called to coincide with nationwide protests. With unions estimating at least 135 demonstrations will take place on Tuesday, some political commentators fear violence could flare, as was the case during protests in Paris last week.

Reuters

Liberia's Taylor disappears

ABUJA, Nigeria—Former Liberian leader and war crimes suspect Charles Taylor has disappeared from the villa in which he was living in exile in this country, the Nigerian presidency said in a statement Tuesday. The statement said Taylor had left his house in Calabar some time on Monday night and President Olusegun Obasanjo, who on Saturday had said that Taylor would be handed back to Liberia, had set up a panel to investigate. Obasanjo's spokesperson Remi Oyo, added: "All the security people who were in charge of looking after Mr. Taylor have been arrested." A five-member panel would investigate who was responsible for the disappearance and "ascertain whether he escaped or was abducted."

AFP

Ex-Ukraine PM wants job back

KYIV—Ukrainian firebrand politician Yulia Tymoshenko, buoyed by a strong election showing, on Monday demanded her job as prime minister back as the price for joining a liberal alliance to keep Moscow-backed parties out of office. Her demand reopened a running feud with President Viktor Yushchenko, her erstwhile ally in Ukraine's democratic "Orange Revolution," who sacked her as premier last year. With just over half the ballots counted, the largest number of votes had gone to the Regions Party of former Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich. He initially won a presidential election with Moscow's support in 2004 until mass protests against fraud led to the result being overturned, ushering Yushchenko in. But Tymoshenko's showing, pushing Yushchenko's Our Ukraine into third place, meant the liberal parties could still combine for an overall majority if they could resolve their differences.

Reuters

TYMOSHENKO

REUTERS

Israelis set to vote

JERUSALEM—Israelis vote in an election on Tuesday billed by Interim Prime Minister Ehud Olmert as a referendum on his plan to uproot some Jewish settlements and set Israel's borders if peace efforts with Palestinians stay frozen.

Reuters

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

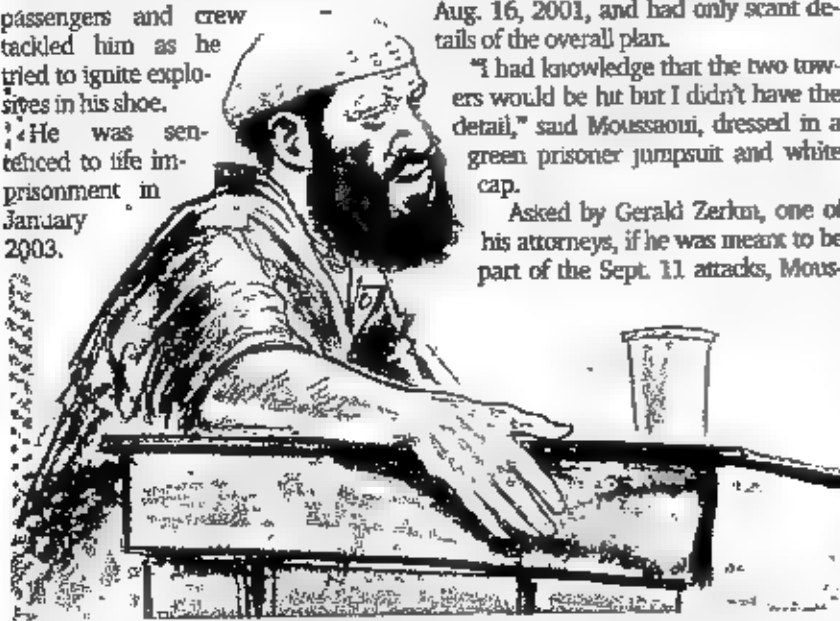
White House dodged 9/11 jet-missile

Moussaoui says he was supposed to fly 5th plane

ALEXANDRIA, VA.—ZACARIAS MOUSSAOUI SAID ON Monday he was supposed to fly a fifth airplane into the White House as part of the Sept. 11 plot and knew two other planes were to fly into New York's World Trade Center.

Taking the stand at his sentencing trial, Moussaoui—the only person charged in the United States in connection with the Sept. 11 attacks—said “shoe-bomber” Richard Reid was to join him as part of the crew in the suicide mission.

Reid failed in an attempt to blow up an American Airlines plane from Paris to Miami in December 2001 after passengers and crew tackled him as he tried to ignite explosives in his shoe. He was sentenced to life imprisonment in January 2003.



COURTROOM drawing of avowed al-Qaida agent Zacarias Moussaoui. AFP

Moussaoui's claim contradicted what he said last year in pleading guilty: That he was not supposed to be part of the Sept. 11 hijackings but was meant to be in a second wave of al-Qaida attacks and fly an airplane into the White House.

Moussaoui said he did not know the precise date of the planned attacks when he was arrested in Minnesota on Aug. 16, 2001, and had only scant details of the overall plan.

“I had knowledge that the two towers would be hit but I didn't have the detail,” said Moussaoui, dressed in a green prisoner jumpsuit and white cap.

Asked by Gerald Zerkut, one of his attorneys, if he was meant to be part of the Sept. 11 attacks, Moussaoui said: “Yes, I was supposed to pilot a plane to hit the White House.”

But shortly after Moussaoui testified, comments by Khalid Sheikh Mohammed—the operational mastermind of the Sept. 11 hijackings—contradicted the claim.

Mohammed, who is being detained by the United States and is testifying through written statements approved by the defense and the prosecution, said Moussaoui was meant to be part of a second wave of attacks—not the Sept. 11 hijackings.

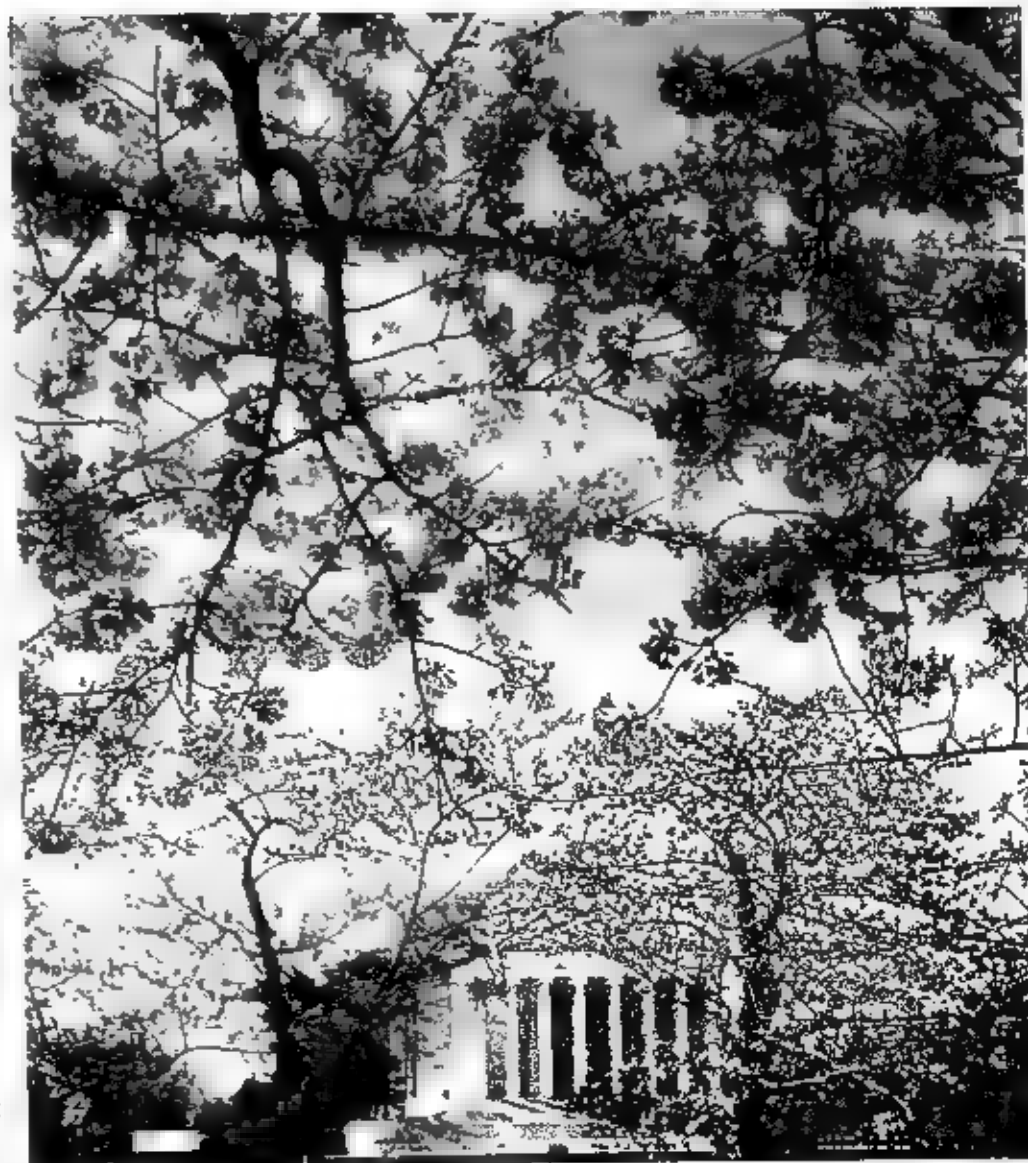
Moussaoui, who testified for nearly three hours, is on trial now to determine if he will be executed.

US District Judge Leonie Brinkema, who is hearing the case, said it could go to the jury as early as Wednesday.

Moussaoui—who does not talk with his court-appointed lawyers whom he has repeatedly tried to fire—had vowed to testify in the trial, though defense experts had said he would likely end up being one of the best witnesses for the prosecution.

Moussaoui, who appeared very calm and spoke in a matter-of-fact manner in contrast to earlier courtroom outbursts, said he was asked in 1999 if he wanted to be a suicide pilot but he initially declined.

He agreed to take part in the plan in 2000 after having a dream about flying a plane into the White House, which he talked about with Osama bin Laden.



THE BUDS begin to blossom on the cherry trees at the Tidal Basin in Washington on March 27. AP

40 Iraqis killed in suicide attack on Army base

BAGHDAD—A SUICIDE BOMBER KILLED AT least 40 people waiting outside an Iraqi Army recruitment center amid rising tension between the dominant Shiite leaders and US forces over a deadly night raid in Baghdad.

Ten other Iraqis were killed in separate rebel violence across Iraq on Monday, seven of them in mortar attacks in south Baghdad which wounded 35 others, while 16 trading company employees were kidnapped by gunmen in the capital.

The suicide bombing on the recruitment center at an Iraqi Army base called Tamarat near the town of Tal Afar, close to the Syrian border was the deadliest single attack in Iraq since a January assault on police recruits in Ramadi.

A militant coalition led by al-Qaida's Iraq branch claimed the blast and identified the suicide bomber as a Saudi.

“A brother ... from Mohammed's Peninsula (Saudi Arabia) ... wearing an explosives belt plunged this morning into the crusaders' base northeast of Tal Afar and infiltrated among hundreds of recruits before blowing himself up,” said the statement on the Internet by the Mujahideen Consultative Council.

The council, established in January, groups seven Sunni Muslim armed factions and is dominated by al-Qaida's Iraqi branch led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi.

The attack came hours after US-backed Iraqi special forces carried out a Sunday night raid in northeast Baghdad killing at least 16 Shiites and triggering a raft of anti-US reactions from the dominant Shiite political parties.

President Jalal Talabani ordered an investigation in the raid.

“This is a grave and dangerous incident,” Talabani told reporters.

The Shiite United Iraqi Alliance (UIA), which holds the largest bloc of seats in the parliament and controls the government, vociferously condemned the action which it said targeted a mosque full of worshippers.

“US forces and Iraqi special forces committed a heinous crime by attacking the Mustafa mosque in the neighborhood of Ur,” said Jawad Malik, the number two of outgoing Prime Minister Ibrahim Jassari's Dawa Party, reading from a statement.

In a slap at the Americans, Malik called on the Iraqi security forces to take full charge of security in the country.

The US military said the operation was against an insurgent cell and did not involve any mosque.

“Iraqi commandos and soldiers from the Iraqi counter-terrorism force killed 16 insurgents and wounded three others during a house-to-house search on an objective with multiple structures,” the US military said in a statement.

The military admitted that members of the US special forces were present in an advisory capacity but said that “no mosques were entered or damaged during this operation.”

Large numbers of weapons were found, including dozens of assault rifles, rocket propelled grenades and launchers, two heavy machine guns and material to make explosives. It said.

AFP

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SPORTS

Express out to halt Bulls stampede

AIR21 FEELS IT HAS A SCORE TO SETTLE against Red Bull while San Miguel is simply hoping to continue its winning ways as both the Express and the Beermen hope to get the job done today in the Gran Matador Brandy-PBA Philippine Cup at the Cuneta Astrodome.

"We met them twice and lost on both occasions," said Air21 coach Bo Perasol, referring to their Red Bull assignments in the elimination round of the recent Fiesta Cup won by the Bulls. After snapping out of a two-game losing spell with a victory over the favored Barangay Ginebra Kings, the Express face another tough test in a

game where the frontline will play a crucial role. The Ateneo connection of Enrico Villanueva, Paolo Bugia and Rich Alvarez is formidable enough. And there's the 7-foot EJ Feñal and the 6-foot-9 Mick Pennisi, who can both create added problems for the Express.

"It's going to be a good matchup," said Perasol, highlighting his frontline plans on Yancy and Ramdel De Ocampo, Mark Tejan and Homer Se.

"They can be small and quick and at the same time, be tall and tough inside the paint."

The Bulls have the luxury, indeed, of going small and quick with the likes of Cyrus Baguio,

Lordy Nigade, Larry Fonacier and Topex Robinson.

But it's not a luxury they can turn into an edge.

In the other game, the Beermen collide with the Sta. Lucia Realtors in what could be a night of career accomplishments for Olsen Racela and Mariou Aquino.

The 6-foot-9 Aquino is five blocks away from becoming the sixth player—after Ramon Fernandez, Philip Cezar, Benjie Paras, Jerry Codiñera and Abet Guidaben—to compile 900 blocks.

Racela, San Miguel's cerebral playmaker, needs 27 minutes of playing time tonight to breach the 20,000 mark. *June Navarro*

PBA cager faces raps

IN HUDDLE



THE THIN, BALD PBA cager must be residing in my neighborhood because we patronize the same Shell station along Quezon Avenue that recently filed a damage to property suit against him.

According to a **Beth Celis** station attendant, the cager drove in flat at 6 o'clock one morning and headed straight for the air pump.

Either he had been up all night or he had gotten up from the wrong side of the bed, because the cager lost his cool when he saw the sign "Out of Order."

"Galit na galit ho na kinuha 'yang kanyang golf club at pinagpapala 'yang air gauge hanggang mabasag. Nung maputol 'yang golf club, inutsa niya at tinamaan ang paa ko," the attendant related.

I said the cager could have been in a sour mood because he was late for a golf game. The station boy said the cager looked like he had not had any sleep at all.

"Mukha hong bangag at pauwi pa lang," he said.

Frankly, I can't imagine how the projected game between the PBA All-Star team and the NBA (former) All-Star selection, led by Dennis Rodman, will turn out.

PBA director for marketing Jack Ruby, assessing Rodman's six other teammates who must all be over 50, placed his bet on the PBA all-stars who, although shorter, are much younger and therefore faster and more energetic.

Promoter Mario Whitnire, who is bringing the NBA group here, let out a howl of protest but accepted Jack's challenge.

If the PBA wins, Mario said he would shave his head. But if the NBA prevails, he said Jack should shave his.

I don't think Jack accepted the wager.

The NBA All-Stars are supposed to play two games in the Philippines—one against the national team at the Araneta Coliseum on May 1, the other against the PBA All-Stars in Mandaue City on April 27.

The PBA All-Star week will be staged in Cagayan de Oro City on April 27, 28 and 29.

Rodman will play alongside Alex English, Kevin Willis, Darryl Dawkins, Calvin Murphy, Sidney Moncrief and Otis Birdsong. Dawkins has conducted a couple of basketball clinics in Manila while Murphy was part of the NBA-Salem team that visited the Philippines back in the '70s. Mario will be paying the entire group \$300,000 for the goodwill tour.

According to Mario, Calvin hasn't changed basically, although he has gained weight. "Who's gonna guard him?" he asked with a straight face.

Question: Will Dennis Rodman's father, Philander, who he hasn't seen for ages, try to touch base with him? Philander is married to a Filipina and has long settled in the Philippines.

From what I heard, Dennis is completely averse to a reunion with his father.

Three Filipino mountaineers will attempt to climb Mt. Everest separately in the next few years.

This is what the pretty lady reporter from ABS-CBN explained to me during the press conference for the Nike Elite Basketball Camp at the Wasabi Restaurant in Makati last Monday.

According to her, one of the climbers will be sponsored by her network, the other by GMA-7 and the third by another entity.

At about the same time, I got a text message from former sports scribe Barbette Aizenza who now works for the PR department of GMA.

Barbette informed me that among the three, GMA bet Romy Garduce will be the first to make the climb.

"He's doing it this year. 'Yung sa ABS-CBN, next year pa. In fact, Romy is in Nepal right now getting acclimatized."

The Mt. Everest expedition, billed as "Pinoy sa Tuktok ng Mundo," will be done for a cause, with the GMA Kapuso Foundation as the beneficiary," Barbette said.

Race 1—(Or/Tri)—Touch of Glory (7), Red Diamond (8), Passing Through (2), Astra Magic (4).

Race 2—(Or/Tri)—Loaded (8), Pangako Sa'Yo (7), Sandok (2), Formidable Jada (5).

Race 3—(Panta/Tri)—Mr. Bonjing (5), Besama Mucho (9), Zero Gravity (8), War General (1), Conglomerate (3).

Race 4—(Or/Tri)—Pas si (4), Accomplice (5), Spoiler (6), Mucho Macho (3).

Race 5—(Super 6/Or/Tri)—Zaniga (1), Manila Magic (7), Rebecca's Magic (9), Amazing Firenze (8), Sutter's Quest (6), Rush Like D'Wind (4).

Race 6—(Or/Tri)—Golden Connection (4), Hillary (8), Tramis (5), Smart Choice (7).

Race 7—(Or/Tri)—Slurter (8), Terminator (5), Mister Cool (8), Strong Jays (7).

Race 8—(Panta/Or/Tri)—Action Mark (6), Magic Bullet (5), La Española (8), Heart of the Wind (1), Vinta's Pride (9).

Race 9—(Super 6/Or/Tri)—Hukom/Ingay Ingay (5), Richie Rich (7), Fly Away Fly (6), Shifty (8), Angel Eyes (4), Guided Missile (3).

Bernis shows way with 69

By Musong R. Castillo

CANILUBANG, LAGUNA—JUN BERNIS FIRED a 3-under-par 69 in the stifling hot conditions yesterday to take a two-shot lead after the first round of the 11th DHL Amateur Open.

The 34-year-old former winner claimed four birdies against a bogey at Cangolf's North course here to lead Canlubang teammates Ronnie Torrecampo and Mark Remando by two.

"This tournament has been very kind to me," Bernis, the 2004 winner and fourth placer last year, said in Filipino. "The course did not play that tough because of the lack of winds."

The top 20 players submitted 76s or better with obscure Ferdinand Aunzo in solo fourth after matching par and jungolf standout Tonitis Asistio and Singapore's Quincy Quek sharing fifth spot with 73s.

Philippine pool members Jay Bayron and Erwin Vinluan assembled 74s for seventh spot, while Boyet Saragoza and former Singapore Am winner Michael Bibar were in a six-man group in ninth place after carding identical 75s.

Newly crowned National Caddies' Open champion Jessie Balasabas dropped five shots in his last four holes and settled for a 76 to share

15th spot with five others, including Singaporean Jonathan Leong.

A total of 71 players teed off in the men's tournament. Nineteen players see action in the 54-hole women's event starting today.

Carmelita Villanueva, the former RP Ladies' champ, and 14-year-old Bacolod standout Mia Picco are entered in the women's field that has a merry mix of the old and young.

Singaporean spearhead Choo Tze Huang, winner of the silver medal behind Jovic Pagunsan in the Southeast Asian Games last year, was the only notable outside the top 20.

Huang opened with a bogey, stumbled with a double bogey on the par-4 seventh and turned in a 40 coming in en route to a 78, good for a tie for 28th spot with five others.

The only blemish in Bernis' 35-34 card came at the 344-yard, par-4 eighth hole, where he failed to hit the green after landing his drive next to a huge tree.

His longest putt for birdie was from eight feet, and he had a similar putt for eagle on the 494-yard, par-5 14th after a monster drive left him with a 9-iron for his second shot.

Torrecampo had nines of 35-36 built around birdies on Nos. 4, 5, 9 and 12.



JUN Bernis celebrates his birdie from eight feet on the 12th. JUN RAYMAN

POC assembly accepts Pilipinas Basketball

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE PHILIPPINE OLYMPIC COMMITTEE WELCOMED to its fold Pilipinas Basketball during yesterday's general assembly—but with a condition.

The formal acceptance of Pilipinas Basketball, which is being penciled to supplant the expelled Basketball Association of the Philippines, will still hinge on a positive result from a trip to Korea that representatives of the country's four major basketball stakeholders will make on April 4.

The condition stands on shaky ground because a fifth stakeholder—required by the international basketball federation (Fiba) as one of the prerequisites for the lifting of a

10-month old ban keeping the country out of international meets—continues to hold out from the group.

BAP president Joey Lano, named as the other stakeholder along with the PBA, PBL, UAAP and NCAA, continues to vouch for the legitimacy of his association.

"We will be in Seoul [South Korea] not only to present the constitution and by-laws of Pilipinas Basketball but also the sentiment of the basketball stakeholders in the country," said PBA commissioner Noli Eala, who will make the trip along with PBA chair Ely Capacio.

But not all governors are on his side. Air21 representative Lito Alvarez is calling on the former sports broadcaster to rethink his participation in the new association.

"I am reminding Commissioner Eala to first clear with the PBA Board any statement/s related to Pilipinas Basketball," said Alvarez in a statement.

PBL commissioner Chino Trinidad is confident that the Fiba will finally relent because the new cage body abided by the conditions embodied in the memorandum of understanding forged by the POC and the Fiba—except for the signature of Lano.

Also yesterday, Manny Lopez was named POC second vice president, replacing Reynaldo Jaylo, who stepped down. Sepak takraw's Mario Tanchangco was elected deputy chief of mission as the POC reserved the position of the head of delegation for First Gentleman Mike Arroyo.

Pacman hard-sells recycled Mexican meat

LAST-MINUTE CALLS WERE UNNECESSARY. The grand media affair at the Manila Hotel last Friday was already a sellout even before organizers could announce it.

Unlike with his beloved President, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, there's no need anymore to sell Manny Pacquiao.

The fellow has become more famous and necessary than Her Excellency.

So did Eric Pineda, top man at Manny Pacquiao Promotions, and lovely wife Mary, have to worry about attendance?

The problem here is no longer Pacquiao, the main merchandise in the July 2 boxing blockbuster at the Araneta Coliseum which Pacman has himself agreed to promote.

It's the quality of opposition. Oscar Larios, who agreed to slug it out with Pacquiao only after being offered \$450,000, happens to be a certified loser.

He was last beaten by Israel Vasquez, a favorite sparring partner of Pacquiao's at Wild Card, for the WBC and IBF superbantam titles.

In order to sell Larios, Pacquiao handlers, including trainer Freddie Roach and manager Shelly Finkel, had to pay Lito Aizenza's Manila a quickie visit over the weekend on an urgent mission.

An alteration of existing fight facts had to be executed.

BARE EYE



Recab Trinidad

They teamed up, somewhat frantically, to picture Larios as a certified winner, every pound, every inch fit to do battle with the very famous Pacman.

Finkel, his glossy pate glowing under the flash of cameras, said something like Larios was always capable of throwing the most number of punches in a single round.

Roach followed up with a warning. He mumbled, rather stammered, that Pacquiao can't afford to be less fit and ready than he was against Erik Morales last January.

They did not say it. But there was also the quiet effort to tell everybody Pacquiao should brace for a possible defeat (against Larios).

Then, joining the team of worriers, broadcast impresario Peter Musny bared that his outfit, ABS-CBN, would bring in Larios for a sales tour here sometime late

next month.

Finkel, Roach, and Pacman himself. No prizefight sales team could be more awe-

But Larios himself had to join in. The crafty, five-foot-eight Mexican ring craftsman would be here to demonstrate that he, who had reigned long as world 122-lb king, is no recycled old meat.

We will never know what they would do next until Larios has hit town.

Maybe they would hire Pacquiao's barber to spar with the Mexican in public?

Here's one Ali-inspired tip. To push the effort a notch higher, they could script a Pacquiao knockout while the national boxing icon spars in public.

Actually, Pacman did suffer a stoppage, a rude one, when he was recently rushed and confined at the Cardinal Santos Hospital, suffering from fatigue.

Told that he has visibly put on weight, a pudgy Pacquiao clarified that it was all a result of the confinement.

"It's, tabang dextrose ito," he quipped from the presidential table during the Elorde Memorial Awards at Dusit Hotel Friday night.

If there's a guy who's genuinely worried, it's not anyone among Pacquiao's handlers.

Dandan rallies, saves day for outgunned RP bets

KYLE JOSHUA DANDAN SURVIVED a brutal massacre of Filipino wild cards yesterday, battling back from a set down to nip China's Zhou Qingzhou, 1-6, 6-4, 7-5, at the start of the 17th Mitsubishi Lancer junior championships at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center.

The 16-year-old Dandan eased the misery of Filipinos in the tourney heavy with foreign flavor.

Pablo Olivarez II bowed to Indonesia's Agung Dewontoro, 7-6, 6-

1, to touch off the rout.

Australia's Jason Lee routed Mark Balce, Japan's Fumaki Kita blasted Raymond Villarete, 6-2, 6-2, Korea's Choi Jae-won drubbed Ralph Kevin Barre, 6-4, 6-1.

Other results: Yoo B. (KOR) d. G. Sundberg (NOR), 6-1, 6-0; M. Karamelli (CZE) d. S. Chiles (UK), 6-3, 6-4; R. Balamy (AUS) d. SP Gupta (IND), 7-6, 6-3; Pang HY (TWN) d. G. Yamita (JPN), 6-4, 6-1, 7-6; Y. Thorndell (FRA) d. B. Cox (US), 6-4, 3-6, 6-2; P. Srikumaravel (TWN) d. Hui Ankov (KOR), 6-7, 6-5, 6-2.



SENIOR GOLF CHAMPS: Category winners in the recent first leg of the San Mig Sugar Free Coffee Senior Golf Series at Eastridge in Antipolo City—(second from left) retired Gen. Clyde Fernandez, Class A; Louie Advincula, Class C; Art Ampaya, Class B; and Frisco San Juan, Class E—with Eastridge Senior Golfers president Raul Perananda (left), Federation of Philippine Amateur Senior Golfers Inc. president Abe Villanueva (extreme right), and San Mig Coffee's Miss Melanie.

SPORTSWATCH

Paragua clinches 3rd straight title

GRANDMASTER MARK PARAGUA WON HIS THIRD TOURNAMENT IN A row by ruling the Prospero Pichay Jr. invitational Tune-up Games Special at the Syncopados Music Bar in Malate, Manila, last Sunday. Paragua won his last assignment against NM Oliver Barbosa to finish with 6.0 points in the event hosted by National Chess Federation of the Philippines president and Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero "Butch" Pichay. The 22-year-old Paragua received the top purse of P10,000, sustaining his victory run that started in the 5th La Jirón Open title and the 2006 Candor City Open. En route to the title, Paragua bested NM Edgardo Garma, GM Joey Antonio, NM Jerome Balico, NM Chito Garma and FM Oliver Dimakiling. His only loss came at the hands of IM Richard Biton in the second round. NM Rolando Nolte, 12-year-old Fide Master Wesley So and the Hiarcs 9.6 software of Reginald Tee and Darl Castro wound up tied for second with 5.5 points each. Tied at 5.0 points were Dimakiling and Barbosa, followed by Antonio, IM Ronald Bancod and FM Jesse Noel Sales at 4.5 points.

Marion Bernardino, Contributor

Lear, Catubay victorious

FORMER PHILIPPINE CHAMPIONS JOHNNY LEAR AND FEDERICO CATUBAY scored separate 10-round decision wins last Saturday. Lear, the former bantam king now on the comeback trail, beat local fighter Edmund Davilleres in Cagayan de Oro to raise his winning streak to four since coming back from a one-year hiatus. Catubay, who was stripped of his flyweight title early this year for his failure to defend it on time, prevailed over OPBF No. 2 junior flyweight Jung Oh-son of South Korea in Seoul. The top-ranked OPBF flyweight Catubay knocked down his opponent in the second round as he remained on course for a crack at the OPBF 112-lb title being held by Japan's Noriyuki Komatsu.

Salven L. Lagumbay, contributor

150 entries in Las Piñas cockfest today

A CASH POT OF P300,000 IS AT STAKE IN THE FASTEST WIN ONCE-COCK Ulutan which will gather more than 150 cockers and breeders from Cavite, Laguna, Batangas and Metro Manila at the Las Piñas Coliseum today. Venue manager Alex Tobias said participants may register as early as 7 a.m. The first fight unfolds at 8 a.m. Entry fee is only P2,200. The top five major prizes are first, P50,000; second, P30,000; third, P20,000; fourth, P15,000 and fifth, P8,000. For inquiries, call 873-1040 or 874-3910.

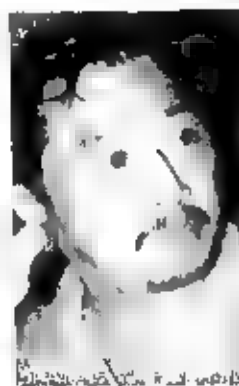
CL-Metro clash up in San Juan derby

A BIG GROUP OF COCKERS FROM CENTRAL LUZON CHALLENGES ITS Metro Manila counterparts in a super 4-cock derby today at the San Juan Coliseum. The 100-fight program is backed by Sagupaan Complexor 3000 and hosted by SJC pit manager Pete Rivera. Bannering the Central Luzon team are Mayor Carmelo Lazatin, Jun and Rudy Jingco, the Madambayan brothers, Mayor Dennis Pineda, Oca Domingo, Peping Taba and Joel Fernando. For cockhouse reservation, call 725-6563 or 725-5369.

Makati 4-cock showdown gets going

THE SHOWDOWN OF TOP COCKERS AT THE MAKATI COLISEUM RESUMES tonight with the staging of a 4-cock derby with 50 fights on tap and B-Meg Derby Ace as sponsor. Participants will come from Rizal, Laguna, Bulacan, Cavite, Zambales, Tarlac and Metro Manila, according to host Ray Oliveros. Last Monday 111 fights were held in the Jobo 5-Cock Derby won by Tony Tan and Ramon Manencaneres (Swing), Henry Navarro (HNRG), Mayor Eddie Alarilla (Antipolo Salamat Po) and Allan Saco (AS WG JL Listana).

BI won't release Lim despite TRO



Lim: BI says TRO covers his deportation.

By Lella B. Salaverria

DETAINED BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION of the Philippines secretary general Graham Lim will remain in the custody of the Bureau of Immigration despite the issuance of a temporary restraining order on his deportation.

Immigration Acting Commissioner Arnel Caronongan said yesterday the Court of Appeals stopped Lim's expulsion from the Philippines but not his detention at the BI cell in Bicutan, Taguig.

Lim was arrested last Friday on charges he represented himself as a Filipino. Lim is a citizen of the Republic of

China (Taiwan), the BI said.

"As far as I know, there was no directive to release Lim," Caronongan said. "The TRO only stopped his deportation."

He said the BI would refer the appellate court's decision to the Office of the Solicitor General and that the bureau might contest the TRO.

Caronongan said Lim had not filed a petition for bail.

The BI commissioner has the discretion to grant bail to the bureau's detainees. But detainees are usually not granted bail when the BI Board of Commissioners has already ordered their de-

portation, intelligence chief Faizal Hussin said in an earlier interview.

In ruling that Lim is an alien, the BI took into account his petitions for naturalization before a Manila Regional Trial Court and the Office of the Solicitor General.

Lim had sought Malacañang's help to no avail.

He will be deported to Taiwan as soon as the BI gets clearance from government agencies that he has no pending cases.

Lim has maintained that he is a Filipino, having been born and raised in the Philippines.

Sandlot faves advance

TOUTED SQUADS FLAUNTED THEIR MIGHT at the start of the Visayas eliminations of the 10th Nestea Beach Volley Championships yesterday at the La Salle Green Hills sand court.

Foundation University and University of St. La Salle won their first two matches while co-favorite University of San Jose-Recoletos (USJR) handled its first assignment in the men's division of the summer spectacle.

Foundation's Kent Bulabon and Rolando Agus bested Colegio dela Punsima Concepcion, 25-14, before downing University of Southern Philippines, 25-19.

University of St. La Salle's Marlon Lucas and Mark Sabusap matched the feat, tripping Iloilo Doctor's College, 25-17, in the morning before stopping University of San Carlos, 25-22, in the afternoon.

The USJR pair of Jonrey Sasing and Joseph Alguno, runners-up to College of St. Benilde in the 2005 finals in Boracay, put on a show in downing the University of the Visayas tandem of Jerome Capada and Jose Ercobañez, 25-14.

Foundation, St. La Salle and USJR are expected to figure well in the Visayas eliminations that offers four slots each for men and women in the Boracay semifinals on May 4 to 6.



KRISTA Mane Dolendo of the University of San Agustin hits the dirt to save a ball. Her teammate with Nerissa Bautista won over the SWU pair of Hazel Pinero and Marites Natad, 25-12. BINE U. SARMENTO

In women's play, University of San Agustin's Nerissa Bautista and Krista Mane Dolendo stunned Marites Natad and Hazel Pineros of three-time defending champion SWU, 25-12.

Also posting early wins were University of Cebu over San Carlos, 25-16; University of Negros Occ over University of Iloilo, 25-5, and St. La Salle over University of Southern Philippines, 26-24.

Government Warning:
Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health.

SPORTS

Nets blank Nash, Suns

EAST RUTHERFORD, NEW JERSEY—STEVE Nash, the NBA's reigning MVP, was held without a point for the first time this season as the New Jersey Nets crushed the Phoenix Suns, 110-72, on Monday.

Nenad Krstic had 21 points and 10 rebounds and Vince Carter chipped in with 20 points to help the streaking Nets win their ninth straight and bring them within two wins of a playoff spot.

The Nets will also clinch the Atlantic Division with five more wins. "No one could have expected this," New Jersey coach Lawrence

Frank told reporters after the game.

"It's definitely a credit to our team. The guys gave a great effort."

It was the largest margin of victory this season for the Nets, who led by as many as 44 at one point, as New Jersey's tenacious defense held the Suns to their lowest point total of the season.

Phoenix, which entered the game averaging 108.4 points, the highest in the NBA, and hadn't scored under 85 points this season, shot a franchise record-low 26.8 percent.

"I take full responsibility for hurting us tonight," Nash told reporters after the game.

"Give them credit. They were pretty stung and outstanding defensively."

The Nets were coming off a big 79-74 win in Detroit on Sunday, handing the Pistons their third loss at home all season.

New Jersey pulled away in the second quarter, going on a 16-4 run at one point, to lead 50-31 at the half. The Nets then out-scored the Suns 33-14 to lead by 38 points after three quarters.

Despite the loss, Phoenix (47-22) still leads the Los Angeles Clippers by six games in the Pacific Division.

In Miami, Shaquille O'Neal scored 23 points and had 11 rebounds as the Heat beat the Indiana Pacers, 96-91.

Dwyane Wade scored 22 points

for the Heat.

The Heat beat the Pacers for only the second time in the teams' last 16 regular-season meetings, doing so even after getting hit with five technical fouls and losing starting forward Udonis Haslem to an ejection in the second quarter after scuffling with Indiana's Jermaine O'Neal.

Stephen Jackson scored 22 points and Peja Stojakovic added 19 points for the Pacers.

In Salt Lake City, Deron Williams scored 20 points as the Utah Jazz beat the New Orleans Hornets, 104-80.

In Oakland, California, Gilbert Arenas scored 40 points and Antawn Jamison added 31 as the former Warriors beat their old team, leading Washington over Golden State, 116-98. Reuters, AP

• NBA on TV

SOLAR SPORTS—Phoenix vs Milwaukee (live at 9 a.m., replay on March 30, 5:30 p.m.)

SPORTS PLUS—San Antonio vs LA Clippers (live at 11:30 a.m., replay at 7 p.m.); Atlanta vs Charlotte (delayed telecast at 9:30 p.m., replay on March 30 at 2:30 p.m.)



INDIANA big man Jermaine O'Neal (left) tries to block an undergoal stab of Miami guard Dwyane Wade.

Thai Thongchai gets Masters invite

AUGUSTA, GEORGIA—THONGCHAI JAIDEE received a special invitation on Monday to play in the Masters, making him the first Thailand-born golfer to compete at this major in 35 years.

The cutoff for the criteria was the US PGA Tour money list and world ranking published after The Players Championship. Only two players were added who were not already eligible—Rory Sabbatini of South Africa and Aaron Oberholser of the

United States, both having won this year and finishing in the top 10 on the money list and top 50 in the rankings.

The Masters often invites a foreign player not already eligible. Thongchai finished among the top three on the Asian Tour money list for five straight years and was the first Thai to win a European tour event.

The 36-year-old Thongchai has won the

Malaysian Open for the last two years. He will become the first Thai-born golfer at the Masters since Sukree Onsham in 1970-71.

Left out of the Masters was Camilo Villegas, a US tour rookie from Colombia who fell one birdie short at Sawgrass of getting into the top 10 on the money list; and JB Holmes, another tour rookie who won the FBR Open in February.

Tiger Woods is the defending champion. AP

Roddick faces 'mysterious' foe

KEY BISCAYNE, FLORIDA—ANDY Roddick heads into the fourth round of the Nasdaq-100 Open with only sketchy information about his next opponent.

"I know what he looks like," Roddick said.

Qualifier Simon Greul is a 24-year-old German ranked 130th. He came to Key Biscayne with a career record of 1-5 on the ATP Tour. Unnerved playing on the stadium court Monday, he won a total of four points in the first set against Tim Henman.

But the upstart from Stuttgart rallied

to beat Henman, 6-6, 6-1, 7-5, and he'll face Roddick on Tuesday.

"I'm going to ask around and try to get more of an in-depth scouting report," said Roddick, who dominated with his serve to beat 31st-seeded Fernando Verdasco, 6-3, 6-4.

Top-seeded Roger Federer improved to 24-1 this year by beating No. 27 Tommy Haas, 6-1, 6-3. Also advancing was No. 9 James Blake, who beat No. 23 Janko



SHARAPOVA

Nieminen, 6-3, 4-6, 6-1.

Four Russians are among the final eight: Maria Sharapova, Nadia Petrova, Anastasia Myskina and Svetlana Kuznetsova.

Sharapova overcame eight double faults to beat fellow Russian Maria Kirilenko, 3-6, 6-4, 6-1.

Elena Dementieva was upset by Tatiana Golovin, 6-2, 6-1. Top-seeded

Amelie Mauresmo lost serve twice but still beat Ana Ivanovic, 7-5, 6-2. AP

KTM riders dominate peewees, stay ahead

PUERTO PRINCESA, PALAWAN—The KTM-Access plus Samson team turned the recent third leg of the National Supercross Series here into its private playground to keep the lead in the peewee 9-under division.

Teammates Jacob Orbe, Joey Aycardo and TJ Alberto swept the podium to maintain the top three spots in the seven-leg tournament organized by National Motorcycle Sports and Safety Association (Namssa).

Orbe, who also dominated the previous legs in Bacolod City and Iloilo City, stamped his class to whip a field of 15 riders.

Orbe tightened his grip on the



PROUDLY displaying their trophies after the event are KTM riders (from left) Raprap Enriquez who ruled the juniors division, and peewee class winners TJ Alberto, Jacob Orbe, Patrick Orbe, Joey Aycardo.

overall lead with a 150-point aggregate thus far.

Aycardo and Alberto are currently in second and third places with 126 and 122 points, respectively.

"The boys really did well in the past legs, we are hoping they can sustain this winning streak until the end of the tournament," said KTM-Access plus Samson team manager Toti Alberto, a three-time national super

bike champion.

Meanwhile, KTM bikers Patrick Orbe (65cc mini class), Moy-moy Flores (peewee 7-under) and Gensel Manuel (junior 85cc) ruled their respective classes during the event.

The KTM-Access plus Samson riders will also join the Juniors National on Apr. 9 in Pangasinan. This will serve as a tune up for the next leg of the national series scheduled in May.

SAMSUNG INTERCLUB

Superals lift Orchard to 5-shot lead

LIPA, BATANGAS—SIBLINGS CRYSTAL and Wolen Superal scored a 74 and 78, respectively, to power Orchard to an early five-stroke lead yesterday in Division I of the Junggol Interclub 2006, the opening leg of the Samsung Summer Circuit, at the Mt. Malabayat Golf and Country Club here.

Counting also the 80 of Nico Sevilla, Orchard made 232 for the day and grabbed a five-shot advantage over the all-male Aguineldo squad which posted a 237.

Gino Bunyi had a 77, Jobim Carlos tallied a 78 and Brent Sumanpong rounded out scoring for the Aguineldo

do betts with an 82.

Riviera Team 1 combined for 239 to stay third while Riviera Team 2 was running fourth at 244 in the tourney which has Samsung and Philippine Airlines as main sponsors.

The other sponsors are DHL, Callaway, Tideist, Mizuno, La Jolla, Taylor Made, Wilson, Ping, MCCI Air Liquid, Auto Magic, Inquirer Golf and Michael Guy.

In Division II, Bino dela Paz (78), RJ Tallud (81) and Sunmi Hwang (91) conspired for 250 to edge ahead by one over Aguineldo with Riviera not too far behind at 252.

JR Gonzales (78), Andie Unson (85) and JP de Claro (88) gave Aguineldo a 251 total while Riviera drew scoring from Maan Legaspi (81), Tinton Arcevala (84) and Miggy Yee (87).

The rest of the standings saw Valley at 284, Wack Wack at 292, Royal Northwoods at 293 and Valley 2 at 296.

In the individual category, Lee Dong Jeun of Eagle Ridge and Crystal paced Class A, Nico Monsalve and Beverly Mendoza paced Class B, Bino dela Paz and Maan Legaspi were ahead in Class C and AR Ramos and Princess Superal showed the way in Class D.

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Development Bank of the Philippines

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Development Bank of the Philippines is inviting interested bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for the Supply and Delivery of One Hundred (100) units LAN Workstation for the New Integrated Deposit Servicing System (NIDSS) Project

Project	Units	Approved Budget*	Cost of Bid Documents
Supply and Delivery of One Hundred (100) units LAN Workstation for the New Integrated Deposit Servicing System (NIDSS) Project	100	P6,000,000.00 Source of Fund: DBP Fund	P5,000.00

*Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid Opening
Expected Date of Delivery: June 2006
Schedule of Activities:

Particulars	Date	Venue
Pre-Bidding Conference	April 17, 2006 (Monday) at 9:00 a.m.	6th Floor, DBP Building, Makati City
Submission of Eligibility Requirement Documents, Technical and Financial Proposals	"On or before" 9:00 a.m. of May 2, 2006 (Tuesday)	BAC Secretariat, 6th Floor DBP Building, Makati City
Opening of Eligibility Requirement Documents, Technical and Financial Proposals (Prospective Bidders are encouraged to attend this activity)	May 2, 2006 (Tuesday) at 9:30 a.m.	6th Floor, DBP Building, Makati City

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the IRR-A of R.A. 9184, and is restricted to Filipino citizens or organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest belonging to citizens of the Philippines and must have been authorized to engage in the Supply and Delivery of LAN Workstation for at least three (3) years. Only Bids from Bidders who passed the eligibility check will be opened. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall undergo the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to the technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during post-qualification procedure.

Interested parties may download these forms at www.devbankphil.com.ph and at the Electronic Procurement Service of the Department of Budget and Management. Prospective bidders may secure the bid documents and Eligibility Requirement Forms from the BAC Secretariat, 6th Floor, DBP Building, Makati City, upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P10,000.00.

The Bank reserves the right to reject any and all bids, annul the bidding process, or not award the contract at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

For further inquiries, please call telephone numbers 8125702/8188511 loc. 2610

Bids and Awards Committee

ENTERTAINMENT

Plinky in a world turned upside down

RUSHES

TV PERSONALITY AND FITNESS EXPERT Plinky Recto, who accused her former boyfriend of kidnapping their one-year-old son, told INQUIRER Entertainment that the last time she was with the child was three weeks

ago, in Negros Occidental.

"I flew all the way there for the hearing. I really missed him. I played with him before and after the court procedures," the controversial TV celebrity said in a phone interview on Monday.

The hearing was for the physical injuries and assault case that the ex-boyfriend had filed against Plinky before a court in said province.

Earlier, in January, Plinky claimed that her former partner, a wealthy Negrense lawyer, forcibly took their son from her home in San Juan, while she was out in a meeting in Quezon City. Plinky filed a kidnapping case before the Mandaluyong City Regional Trial Court.

Plinky said the Mandaluyong RTC has requested her not to make any statements to the media about the status of the case.

As for that hearing in Negros Occidental, Plinky could not help recounting: "He

set up a buffet table inside the courthouse for all the staff members."

Scrimping

Show biz talk program "S-Files" is reportedly scrimping on the talent fees of its hosts. Apart from main anchors, Paolo Bediones, Pia Guanio, Joey Marquez and Richard Gomez, the show has taken on newbie Princess Violago to replace the four "Show Biz Helleour" segment hosts IC Mendoza, Alessandra da Rossi, Jeremy Marquez and Teri Onor.

PLINKY Recto

JIM GUANO PUNZALAN

PIM turnover

Instead of flying to Southern Leyte for the turnover of funds collected from the highly successful "Celebrity Tiangge for Leyte" in Taguig City, organizer Ruffa Gutierrez announced that the money will be given today to the United Children's Fund (Unicef) in Makati City, and the Philippine National Red Cross in Intramuros.

'When I'm 61...'

After incessant declarations that she's only 46 years old, fortuneteller-slash-scandal magnet Madame Auring finally admitted on the Sunday night gab fest "Sharon," that she's 61 years old, but in a roundabout way.

"I'm 16," she fearlessly told the flabbergasted host, Sharon Cuneta. "But in reverse," Madame added.

"By the way, her eldest is 40 years old," fellow guest Mystica interjected.

"I had her when I was sixteen," Madame Auring insisted on national TV.

When Cuneta asked Mystica if she had ever undergone plastic surgery, Mystica unleashed another quotable quote. "These are real," she said, describing her ample bosom. "Really expensive."

RUFFA Gutierrez

JIM GUANO PUNZALAN

Search for Zsa

ZSA

The movie version of "Zsa Zsa Zatur-nah," the comic book, was reportedly acquired by Regal—and Mark Melly has been tapped to direct it. According to the grapevine, the lead role, which was played by Eula Valdez onstage, is a toss-up between "Ako Legal Wife" co-stars Zsa Zsa Padilla and Ruffa Mae Quinto.

Quinto supposedly has the edge because she also played a campy superheroine in Viva's "Super B."

So how is this going to be decided? With a tape measure?

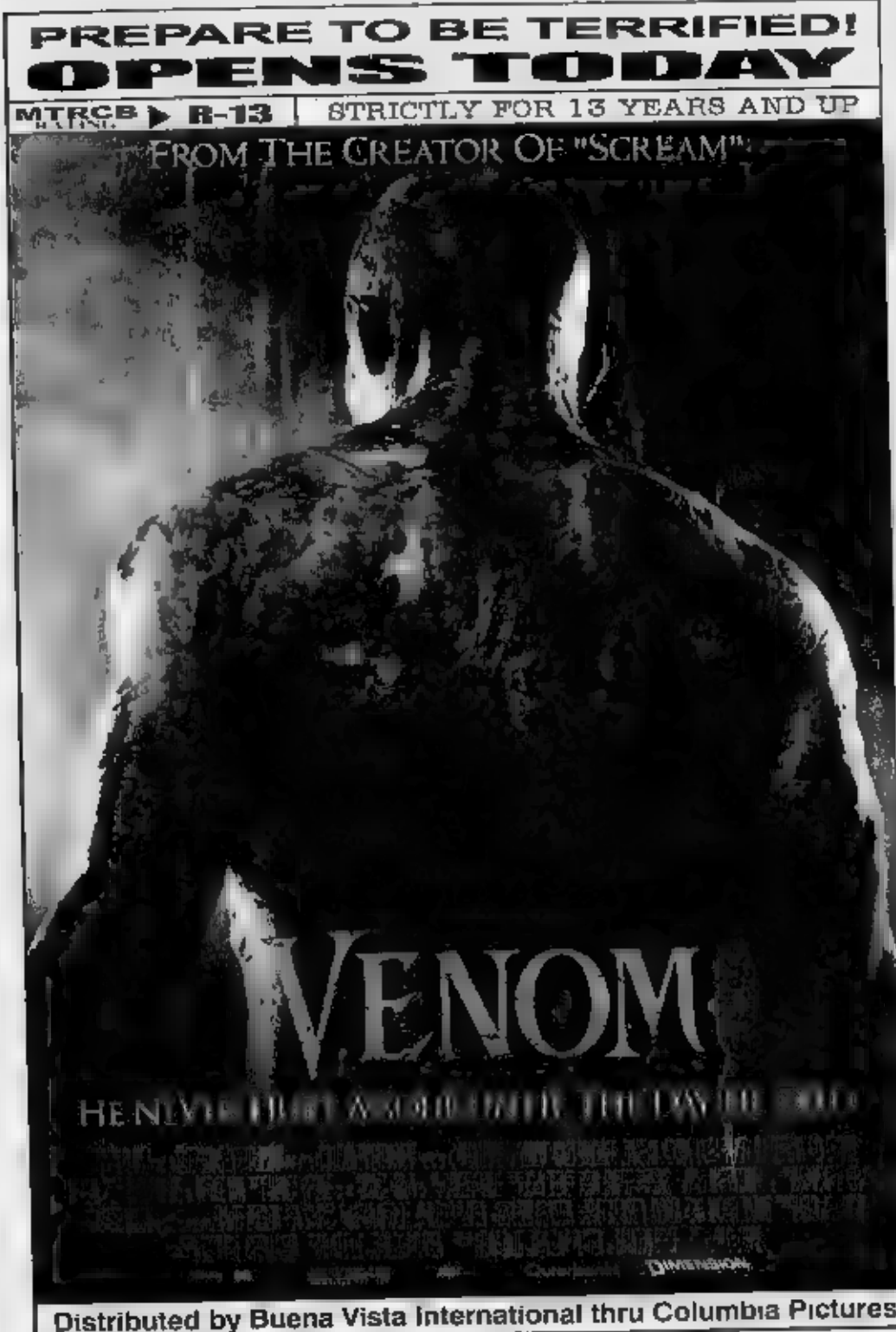
ZSA Zsa Padilla

JIM GUANO PUNZALAN

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2	ICE AGE 2	1:40, 3:50, 6:00, 8:10, 10:30
3	ICE AGE 2	12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 9:50
4	VENOM	2:15, 4:25, 6:35, 8:45, 11:00

<p>glorietta GREENBELT</p> <p>AT THE CINEMAS</p> <p>Reserve your tickets by texting BURESEATS 682 or BURESEATS 04 to 2233 (Globe) or 311 (Smart) or log on to www.buresseats.com for web reservations.</p> <p>Movie schedules may change without prior notice. For verification, please call 726-7777</p>				<p>At the Activity Center</p> <p>Customer Service toll hotline: 0917 6095900</p> <p>Customer Service Numbers:</p> <p>Glorietta 752 7272; from 10am to 8pm</p> <p>Greenbelt 752 4853; from 11am to 12pm</p> <p>Alabang Town Center - 842 2762; from 10am to 8pm</p> <p>Ayala Center Cebu - (032) 231 5342 loc 324</p> <p>Market! Market! - 886 7519</p>			
<p>G1</p> <p>1 ULTRAVIOLET 2 MOMENTS OF LOVE 3 ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN 4 BASIC INSTINCT 2</p>				<p>GLORIETTA</p> <p>BPI Installment Madness March 15 to 31, 2006</p>			
<p>G4</p> <p>1 VENOM 2 JUST FRIENDS 3 BASIC INSTINCT 2</p>				<p>ALABANG TOWN CENTER</p> <p>Anson's Emporium Exhibit March 12 to 31, 2006</p>			
<p>GB1</p> <p>1 JUST FRIENDS 2 BASIC INSTINCT 2</p>				<p>AYALA CENTER CEBU</p> <p>Child Development Center of Cebu's Culminating Activities March 30, 2006</p>			
<p>GB3</p> <p>1 ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN 2 JUST FRIENDS</p>				<p>MARKET! MARKET!</p> <p>Levi's Engineered Freedom Park April 1 & 2, 2006</p>			
<p>ATC</p> <p>1 ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN 2 ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN</p>				<p>Ayala Museum Summer Workshop Sampler</p> <p>June 1, 2006 - November 4, 2006</p>			
<p>ACC</p> <p>1 ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN 2 BASIC INSTINCT 2 3 VENOM 4 MOMENTS OF LOVE</p>				<p>Onstage!</p> <p>Repertory Philippines presents 7 NE-UMAGA at REP's Globe Theater - March 24, 25, 26, 31, April 1, 2, 7, 8, 9</p> <p>For inquiries, pls. call 887-0710</p>			
<p>M2</p> <p>1 MOMENTS OF LOVE 2 VENOM</p>				<p>Ayala MUSEUM</p> <p>Registration is now ongoing for Ayala Museum's Summer Art Festival Workshop 2006</p> <p>For inquiries, please call 757-7117 to 21 loc 26 or visit www.ayalamuseum.org</p>			

the much-awaited film version of the award-winning Broadway musical

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MARCH 31	HALE
APRIL 1	NYOY VOLANTE
APRIL 7	DAMDOO
APRIL 8	SPONGECOLA

Ayala Malls

ROUNDUP

Top 10 films

LOS ANGELES—Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at US and Canadian theaters, according to Exhibitor Relations Co. Inc., official trackers:

- 1) "Inside Man," \$29M;
- 2) "V for Vendetta," \$12.3M;
- 3) "Stay Alive," \$11.2M;
- 4) "Failure to Launch," \$10.8M;
- 5) "The Shaggy Dog," \$9.1M;
- 6) "She's the Man," \$7.4M;
- 7) "Larry the Cable Guy: Health Inspector," \$7.05M;
- 8) "The Hills Have Eyes," \$4.25M;
- 9) "Eight Below," \$2.7M;
- 10) "16 Blocks," \$2.2M. AP



JET LI

Jet Li sued

BEIJING—Action star Jet Li has been sued for his new movie about a late Chinese kung fu master, whose relatives say it dishonors and misrepresents his life, the official Xinhua News Agency said Sunday.

Li's name has been added to a March 7 lawsuit against producers and distributors of "Fearless" filed by Huo Yuanjia's grandson, who does not want the movie to be released worldwide, Xinhua said.

Huo Shoujin also wants the film to be pulled from theaters in Asia and is demanding a public apology. AP

In the flesh

NEW YORK—Ever wonder what Bart Simpson would look like in human form?

The long-running animated Fox series "The Simpsons" was set to unveil a live-action opening sequence last Sunday. In it, the dysfunctional cartoon family—Bart, Homer, Marge, Lisa and Maggie—

would appear in real life, played by look-alike actors.

"I'm just amazed there are people who want to be known for looking like the Simpsons," said Al Jean, the show's executive producer, in a statement. AP



FRED SAVAGE

Wonder dad

LOS ANGELES—Actor Fred Savage, best known as the kid star on ABC-TV's "The Wonder Years," is going to be a father.

He and wife Jennifer are expecting their first child in August, Fred's agent Brian Swardstrom confirmed.

Savage, 29, starred as wide-eyed Kevin Arnold, growing up amid '60s morals and mores on the ABC series from 1988-93.

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*Promo starts on April 15, 2006

movietime NEW MOVIES

1 JUST FRIENDS

2 MOMENTS OF LOVE

3 VENOM

1 THE DARK

2 NANNY MCPHEE

3 V FOR VENDETTA

1 ICE AGE 2

2 VENOM

3 SHE'S THE MAN

PODIUM	SM CITY FAIRVIEW	SM CITY MANILA
ICE AGE 2 12:15 FS / 12:40 MF / 02:45 04:50 / 06:55 / 08:30 LFS 09:00 LMF / 10:30 END	THE DARK NANNY MCPHEE V FOR VENDETTA ULTRAVIOLET JUST FRIENDS ICE AGE VENOM MOMENTS OF LOVE ICE AGE 2 FINAL DESTINATION 3 SHAGGY DOG SHE'S THE MAN	ICE AGE 2 VENOM SHE'S THE MAN V FOR VENDETTA NANNY MCPHEE ULTRAVIOLET MOMENTS OF LOVE THE DARK FEARLESS FINAL DESTINATION 3 JUST FRIENDS ICE AGE
JUST FRIENDS 02:15 FS / 02:45 MF / 04:50 06:55 / 8:30 LFS 09:00 LMF / 10:35 END	SM CITY STA. MESA ICE AGE 2 ICE AGE 2 ULTRAVIOLET SHAGGY DOG MOMENTS OF LOVE V FOR VENDETTA NANNY MCPHEE VENOM JUST FRIENDS SHE'S THE MAN	SM CITY SOUTHWALL ICE AGE ICE AGE 2 MOMENTS OF LOVE VENOM SHE'S THE MAN JUST FRIENDS FINAL DESTINATION 3 V FOR VENDETTA ULTRAVIOLET
SM CITY NORTH EDSA ULTRAVIOLET V FOR VENDETTA MOMENTS OF LOVE RESERVED JUST FRIENDS VENOM ICE AGE 2 SHE'S THE MAN	SM CITY BRIGHTMAN ICE AGE 2 MOMENTS OF LOVE VENOM ULTRAVIOLET	SM SUPERCENTER VALENZUELA FINAL DESTINATION 3 ICE AGE 2 MOMENTS OF LOVE VENOM
SM CITY DASMARINAS ICE AGE VENOM ULTRAVIOLET MOMENTS OF LOVE	SM CITY SAN LAZARO VENOM ICE AGE 2 ICE AGE 2 ULTRAVIOLET JUST FRIENDS MOMENTS OF LOVE	SM CITY SUGAR ICE AGE 2 VENOM MOMENTS OF LOVE ULTRAVIOLET

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SM CITY BAGUIO	LEZON	SM CITY PAMPANGA
VENOM MOMENTS OF LOVE FINAL DESTINATION 3 ICE AGE 2	SM CITY BACOD V FOR VENDETTA SHAGGY DOG ICE AGE 2 NANNY MCPHEE VENOM MOMENTS OF LOVE FINAL DESTINATION 3 SHE'S THE MAN	VENO ICE AGE 2 SHE'S THE MAN HOUSE OF FURY MOMENTS OF LOVE MOMENTS OF LOVE
SM CITY MARILAO ULTRAVIOLET ICE AGE 2 MOMENTS OF LOVE FINAL DESTINATION 3	SM CITY STA. ROSA SHE'S THE MAN VENOM MOMENTS OF LOVE ICE AGE	SM CITY LUCENA ICE AGE 2 16 BLOCKS THE DARK MOMENTS OF LOVE
SM CITY BATANGAS MOMENTS OF LOVE MOMENTS OF LOVE ICE AGE 2 16 BLOCKS	SM CITY MOLINO ICE AGE 2 MOMENTS OF LOVE NANNY MCPHEE ULTRAVIOLET	

SM CITY CEBU	WISAYAS MINDANAO	SM CITY DAVAO
RESERVED VENOM 11:20 FS / 11:30 MF / 01:10 02:50 / 04:30 / 05:10 07:50 / 09:15 LFS 08:30 LMF / 10:55 END	RESERVED ICE AGE 2 FINAL DESTINATION 3 MOMENTS OF LOVE SHAGGY DOG RESERVED V FOR VENDETTA	BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE NEW WORLD MOMENTS OF LOVE HOUSE OF FURY VENOM ICE AGE 2
ICE AGE 2 11:20 FS / 11:30 MF / 01:10 03:30 / 05:30 / 08:05 LFS 09:30 LMF / 11:05 END	SM CITY CAGAYAN VENOM FINAL DESTINATION 3 MOMENTS OF LOVE ICE AGE 2	
SYRIANA CASANOVA BREAKING NEWS MOMENTS OF LOVE V FOR VENDETTA		

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- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1 ICE AGE 2 • THX | 6 BASIC INSTINCT 2 |
| 2 MOMENTS OF LOVE | 7 JUST FRIENDS |
| 3 LUCKY SLEVEN | 8 SHE'S THE MAN |
| 4 VENOM | 9 ULTRAVIOLET |
| 5 ICE AGE 2 | 10 NANNY MCPHEE |

ERMITA

638-7808 to 12

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| 1 ICE AGE 2 | |
| 2 NANNY MCPHEE
ULTRAVIOLET | 5 VENOM |
| 3 LUCKY SLEVEN | 6 MOMENTS OF LOVE |

METRO EAST

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|--------------------|-------------------|
| 1 JUST FRIENDS | 5 MOMENTS OF LOVE |
| 2 LUCKY SLEVEN | 6 VENOM |
| 3 ICE AGE 2 | 7 NANNY MCPHEE |
| 4 BASIC INSTINCT 2 | 8 SHE'S THE MAN |

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| 1 BASIC INSTINCT 2 | 4 VENOM |
| 2 MOMENTS OF LOVE | 6 LUCKY SLEVEN |
| 3 ICE AGE 2 | 8 JUST FRIENDS |

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|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1 MOMENTS OF LOVE | 1 BASIC INSTINCT 2 |
| 2 ICE AGE 2 | 2 ICE AGE 2 |
| 3 RESERVE | 3 VENOM |
| 4 RESERVE | 4 LUCKY SLEVEN |

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|-------------------|
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| 2 VENOM |
| 3 ICE AGE 2 |
| 4 MOMENTS OF LOVE |

- | |
|-------------------|
| 1 MOMENTS OF LOVE |
| 2 ICE AGE 2 |
| 3 GLORY ROAD |
| 4 16 BLOCKS |

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|-------------------|
| 1 MOMENTS OF LOVE |
| 2 ICE AGE 2 |
| 3 VENOM |
| 4 HOUSE OF FURY |
| 5 ULTRAVIOLET |

- | |
|-----------------------|
| 1 VENOM |
| 2 ICE AGE 2 |
| 3 FINAL DESTINATION 3 |
| 4 MOMENTS OF LOVE |

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| 2 ICE AGE 2 |
| 3 VENOM |
| 4 ULTRAVIOLET |

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| 1 MOMENTS OF LOVE |
| 2 ICE AGE 2 |
| 3 VENOM |
| 4 LAST HOLIDAY |
| 5 SHE'S THE MAN |
| 6 HOUSE OF FURY |

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|-------------------|
| 1 ICE AGE 2 |
| 2 MOMENTS OF LOVE |
| 3 ICE AGE 2 |
| 4 GLORY ROAD |
| 5 SYRIANA |
| 6 THE DARK |

- | |
|-----------------------|
| 1 ICE AGE 2 |
| 2 GLORY ROAD |
| 3 FINAL DESTINATION 3 |
| 4 MOMENTS OF LOVE |



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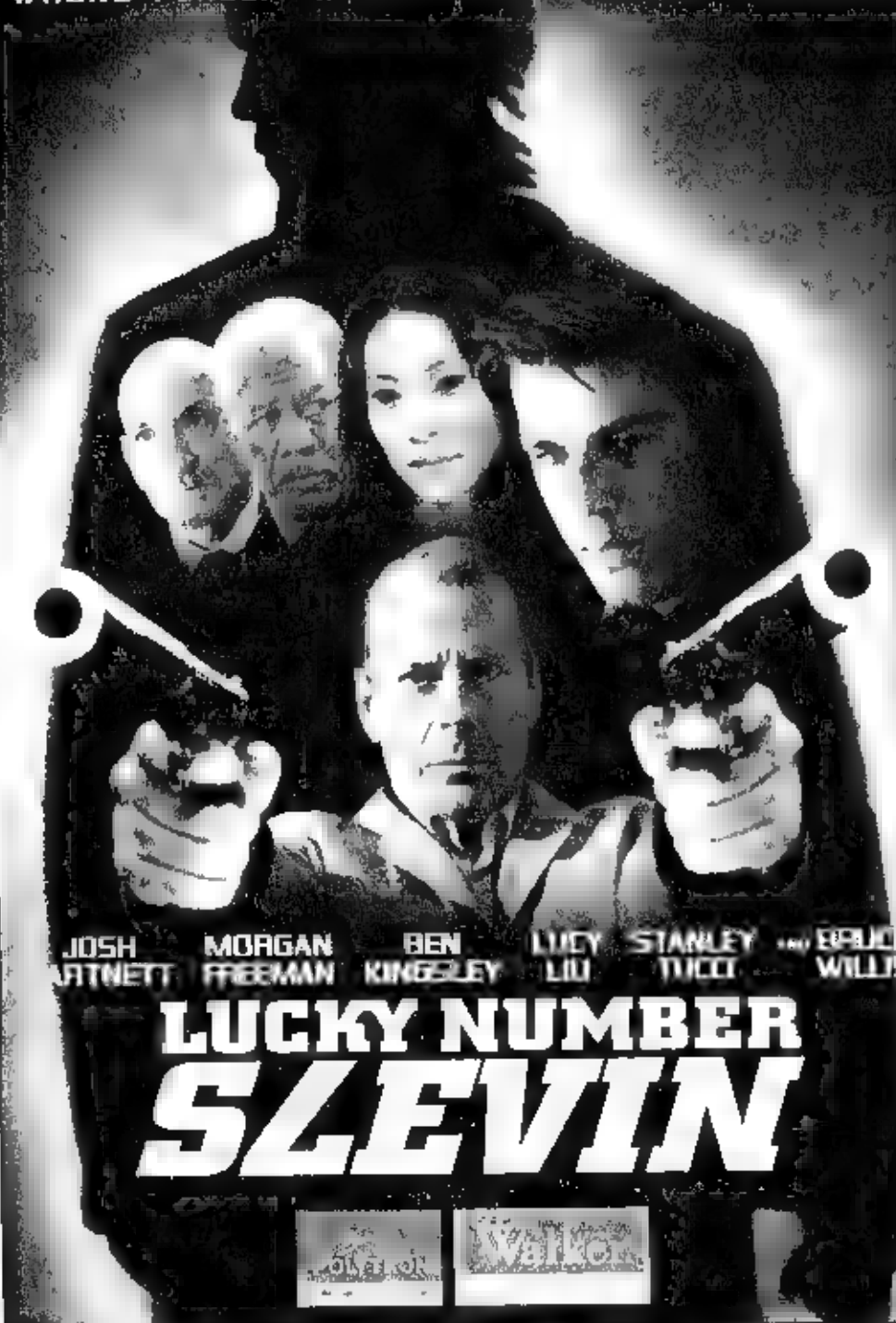
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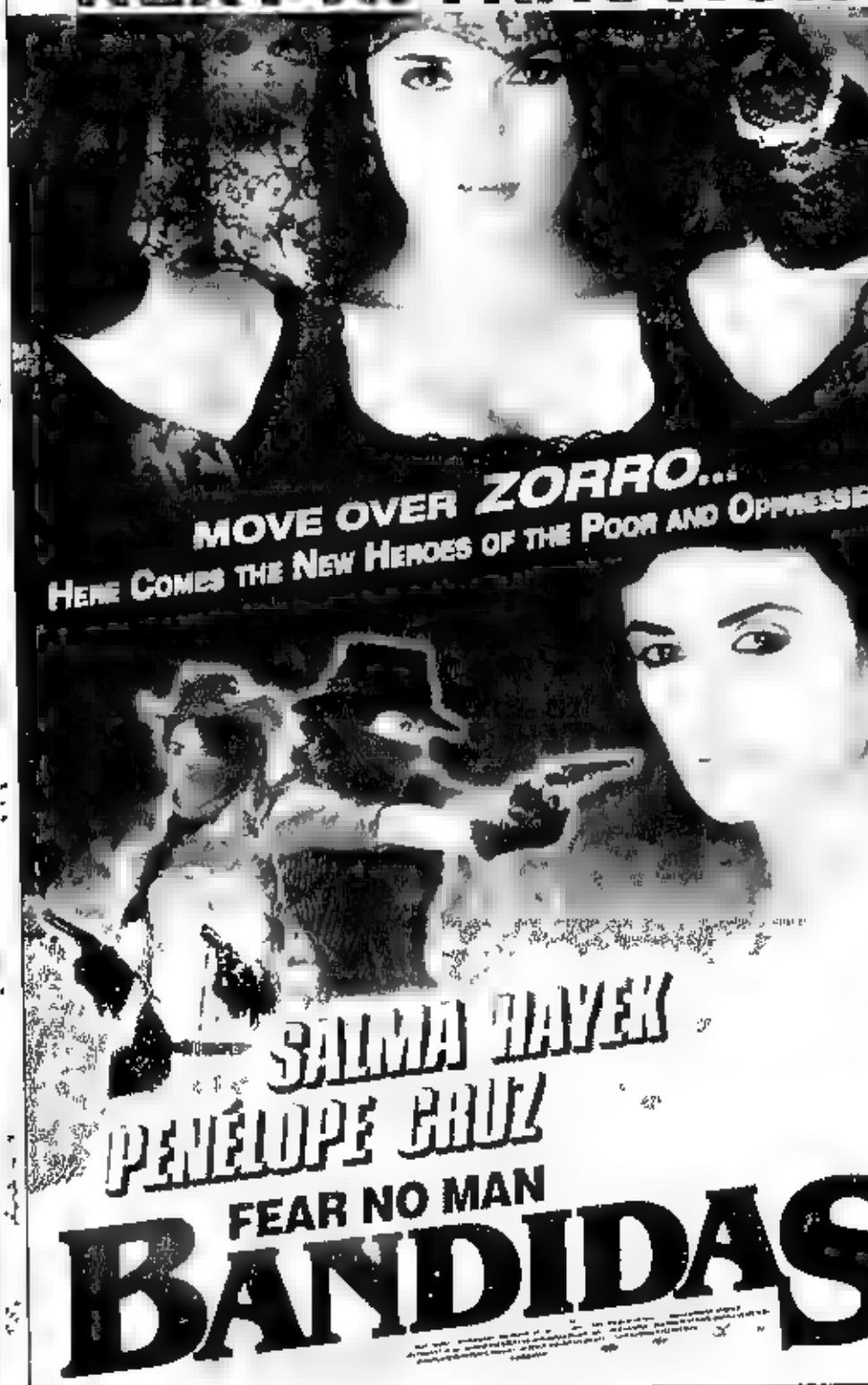


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Per BFAD Permit No. 0169, series of 2006

From page A2-1



Stone, Charlotte Rampling,
David Morrissey
Directed by Michael Caton-Jones

In this sequel to the erotic thriller, icepick-wielding novelist Catherine Tramell (Stone) relocates to London and gets in trouble with cops as a result of the sudden death of a sports star. She is evaluated by a psychologist (Morrissey) assigned by the Scotland Yard. Naturally, the shrink falls under the blonde seductress' spell. Joshua Tyler of *Cinemabend.com* disagrees: "[Basic Instinct] didn't need a sequel a decade ago and it certainly doesn't need one now... [Stone] 10 years past her nudity expiration date."

Ice Age 2: The Meltdown

Voiced by Ray Romano, Queen Latifah, John Leguizamo, Denis Leary

Directed by Carlos Saldanha

Another sequel, this one for the kinder crowd. As the Ice Age draws to a close, our animal-heroes are panicking because a glacial dam is about to burst, threatening to flood the whole valley. As such, mammoth, sloth and saber-toothed tiger must work as a team and embark on a journey of survival. Scott Weinberg of *Rotten Tomatoes.com* says: "The plot is not all that important but... expect the kids to deliver some huge box-office coin for this one."

Venom

Stars Agnes Bruckner, Bijou Phillips, Jonathan Jackson

Directed by Jim Gillespie

Teeners must escape from a "snake-powered bogeyman" spawned in the swamps of Louisiana. Bob Longino of *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* describes it as "a serviceable, if completely humorless meat grinder." *Atlanta* *Times* comments: "[It] can't be called a good movie, but within its genre, it's perfectly palatable."



Rent

Stars Rosario Dawson, Idina Menzel, Taye Diggs

Directed by Chris Columbus

The struggles of hungry young artists are set to music in the movie version of a Broadway hit. The much-awaited (if much-delayed) film adaptation helmed by Columbus has been greeted by mixed reviews, though. Melinda Ennis of *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* raves, "[The] rock musical brings new magic to the urban scene." Roger Ebert of the *Chicago Sun-Times* differs: "On film, 'Rent' is the sound of one hand clapping." Exclusively at Ayala Malls Cinemas

Lucky Number Slevin

Stars Josh Hartnett, Morgan Freeman, Ben Kingsley, Lucy Liu, Bruce Willis

Directed by Paul McGugan

Mistaken for another man, Slevin (Hartnett) gets entangled in a web of violence woven by two warring crime lords (Kingsley and Freeman). A hit man (Willis) joins in the mad chase. Justin Chang of *Variety* deems the film "thoroughly—and sometimes justifiably—infatuated with its own cleverness." Kirk Honeycutt of *The Hollywood Reporter* commends it for being "a fast-paced, funny riff on film noir... [but] it might be too slick and clever for its own good."

MMTA METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION MOVIE GUIDE NOW SHOWING

SHANGHAI CINAPLEX	FILINVEST FESTIVAL CINEMA	WESTWOOD CINEMAS
4th Floor Shangri-La Plaza EDSA corner Shangri-La Plaza, Mandaluyong City Tel: 833-2227 / 833-2228	(Montalupa) Tel: 850-3571 or 72	(Eastwood City) Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave. (C-5) American City Tel: 687-6963 or 72
1 (noon) ICE AGE 2 GP	1 (noon) SHAGGY DOG	1 (noon) BASIC INSTINCT 2
2 (noon) VENOM R13	2 (noon) FINAL DESTINATION	2 (noon) ICE AGE 2
3 (noon) NANNY MCPHEE	3 (noon) SHE'S THE MAN	3 (noon) ICE AGE 2
4 (noon) BASIC INSTINCT 2 R13	4 (noon) V FOR VENDETTA	4 (noon) VENOM
	5 (noon) NANNY MCPHEE	
	6 (noon) ULTRAVIOLET	
	7 (noon) GLORY ROAD	
	8 (noon) HOSTEL	
	9 (noon) NORTH COUNTRY	
	10 (noon) 16 BLOCKS	
CINEMA 2000	Blue Wave	CINEMA 2000
Walmart Center, Chino Rocas Ave. cor Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City Tel: 816-4214 / 816-4215	Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor G.R. Fernando Street, Sta. Nino, Marikina City Tel: 324-1927	(Calamba) Tel: (049) 545-7383
1 (noon) V FOR VENDETTA	1 (noon) GLORY ROAD	1 (noon) CASANOVA
2 (noon) NANNY MCPHEE	2 (noon) NANNY MCPHEE	2 (noon) BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE
3 (noon) GLORY ROAD	3 (noon) ULTRAVIOLET	3 (noon) 16 BLOCKS
4 (noon) ULTRAVIOLET	4 (noon) RESERVED	4 (noon) ST ANGIE
starmall	Blue Wave	CINEMA 2000
(Mandaluyong) Tel: 726-1550	Mandaluyong Tel: 533-3853 / 533-3856	(Lipa) Tel: (045) 982-1729
1 (noon) BASIC INSTINCT 1	1 (noon) HOSTEL	1 (noon) DATE MOVIE
2 (noon) SOON TO OPEN	2 (noon) NEW BLOOD	2 (noon) THE DESCENT
3 (noon) MOMENTS OF LOVE	3 (noon) BREAKING NEWS	3 (noon) CASANOVA
	4 (noon) RESERVED	4 (noon) AEON FLUX
metropolis star cinema	Maragana CINEMA	CINEMA 2000
www.clickdirect.com.ph	(Pasig) Tel: 833-3290 / 833-3274	(Pinaric) Tel: (049) 795-3320
(ALABANG) Tel: 850-295 / 843-9994	1 (noon) ULTRAVIOLET	1 (noon) V FOR VENDETTA
1 (noon) MOMENTS OF LOVE	2 (noon) V FOR VENDETTA	2 (noon) SHAGGY DOG
2 (noon) BASIC INSTINCT 1	3 (noon) HOUSE OFF JURY	3 (noon) SAW-2
3 (noon) VENOM		
4 (noon) ICE AGE 2		
THEATRES	Center Mall Cinema	Lianas Cinema
18 Pacific Mall Corporation, Tel: 1059 600-3075	Baguio Center Mall, Maguayay Avenue (Baguio City) Tel: (074) (444) 3346	(Pasig) Tel: 640-4745
1 (noon) 16 BLOCKS	1 (noon) SHAGGY DOG	1 (noon) HOSTEL
2 (noon) DATE MOVIE	2 (noon) DATE MOVIE	2 (noon) PIRANHA-3
3 (noon) FEARLESS		
PACIFIC MALL CINEMAGIC	Jade Cinema	Lianas Cinema
Pacific Mall, Lucena Tel: (043) 860-6271	(Alabang) Tel: (045) 887-5001 to 03	(Alabang) Tel: 850-1276
1 (noon) AEON FLUX	1 (noon) 16 BLOCKS	1 (noon) FINAL DESTINATION 2
2 (noon) DATE MOVIE	2 (noon) CASANOVA	2 (noon) SANDAKOT NA KALIGAYAHAN
3 (noon) RESERVED	3 (noon) FINAL DESTINATION	3 (noon) RED ROSES
	4 (noon) V FOR VENDETTA	4 (noon) SNEAK CHARMER
Cine Nepo	Cine Nepo	Lianas MovieCity
(Alabang City) Tel: (045) 887-0121	(Dagupan City) Tel: (075) 5-5-8449	(Calamba) Tel: (049) 545-7292
1 (noon) RESERVED	1 (noon) 16 BLOCKS	1 (noon) 16 BLOCKS
2 (noon) RESERVED	2 (noon) DATE MOVIE	2 (noon) BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE
3 (noon) RESERVED	3 (noon) FEARLESS	3 (noon) ST ANGIE
4 (noon) RESERVED	4 (noon) THE DARK DAY HISTORY OF VIOLENCE	4 (noon) CASANOVA
Centre Plaza Cinema	Cine Nepo	Fiesta World Mall
(Balanga, Batangas) Tel: (047) 237-7007	(Dagupan City) Tel: (075) 5-5-8449	(Lipa) Tel: (043) 981-0790
1 (noon) BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE	1 (noon) 16 BLOCKS	1 (noon) JHANG TIKIM
2 (noon) FEARLESS	2 (noon) DATE MOVIE	2 (noon) CASANOVA
	3 (noon) RESERVED	3 (noon) DATE MOVIE
	4 (noon) RESERVED	4 (noon) SHAGGY DOG
Bertha Cinema	Bertha Cinema	Bertha Cinema
(Bacaran) Tel: 879-2030 / 879-2029	(Bacaran) Tel: 879-2030 / 879-2029	(Bacaran) Tel: 879-2030 / 879-2029
1 (noon) HOUSE OF FURY	1 (noon) HOUSE OF FURY	1 (noon) HOUSE OF FURY
2 (noon) CHECK IN	2 (noon) CHECK IN	2 (noon) CHECK IN

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT
TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

OPENING TODAY

Just Friends

Stars Ryan Reynolds, Amy Smart, Chris Klein
Directed by Roger Kumble
A playboy revisits his hometown to woo the girl that got away. Sue

Pierman of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel thinks that the director "provides speed, not substance ... [but] there are moments of guilty-pleasure hilarity." Ty Burr of the Boston Globe raves, "It's crass, unsophisticated ... so sue me, I laughed. A lot."

POWER PLANT
CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City
MOVIES AND SCREENING SCHEDULES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL 888-1111.
MATTINEE P11.00 - FREE SEATING - SCREENINGS BEFORE 9:00 PM - MON. TO FRI.

LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN	BASIC INSTINCT 2 R18	NANNY MCPHEE G
JUST FRIENDS R13	VENOM R13	ICE AGE 2 G

SHANG CINEPLEX

1 ICE AGE 2 MTRCB GP 1:20, 3:30, 5:40, 7:50, 10:00 LMF	3 NANNY MCPHEE MTRCB GP
2 VENOM MTRCB R-13 1:20, 3:30, 5:40, 7:50, 10:00 LMF	4 BASIC INSTINCT 2 MTRCB R-18 2:00, 4:40, 7:20, 10:00 LMF

PREMIERE THEATRE ICE AGE 2
MTRCB GP 2:15, 4:25, 6:35, 8:45 LMF
Movies and screenings are subject to change without prior notice.

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See posters and flyers for details.

Call 633-7851, loc. 171 or 636-2227 for more details.

GREENHILLS CINEMAS
THEATRE-MALL
NOW SHOWING

1 VENOM R13	2 LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN R13
PROMENADE	
3 ICE AGE 2 GP	4 BASIC INSTINCT 2 R18
5 ICE AGE 2 GP	

TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR CINEMA INQUIRIES, CALL: 722-4496.

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MARCH 30, 2006
MARCH 31, 2006
EVERY MONDAY
MARCH 30 & 31, 2006

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MARCH 30, 2006
MARCH 31, 2006
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THE BLOOD WAR IS ON
Distributed by COLUMBIA PICTURES

MTRCB G GENERAL PATRONAGE ALL AGES ADMITTED

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ICE AGE 2

GRAND OPENING TODAY

OPENS TODAY
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justfriends
TWO WORDS A GUY NEVER WANTS TO HEAR

YOU'LL LAUGH FROM BEGINNING TO END.
JIM FERGUSON, NGUN-TV (ABC)

RYAN REYNOLDS AMY SMART CHRIS KLEIN

OPENS TODAY IN THE FOLLOWING THEATERS:
GLORietta 1&4 GREENBELT 1&3 POWERPLANT Shangri-La Gateway Festival Aabang Town Robinson's (ERMITA, GALLERIA, METROEAST, PIONEER, NOVALICHES, LETRE) CINERAMA Goleco City ROSEN WalkerMart MAKATI Market-Market EastWood BLUEWAVE Sta. Lucia Starmall ABC Ali Mail Greenhills REMAR Melropolis Goleco GRAND Goleco COMMONWEALTH Masagana PASAY (CEBU) Ayala E-MALL Oriente Cineplex Cinema (DAVAO) Gaizano Victoria JS NCCC

"DARING, RADICAL AND REMARKABLE"
Harris Reynolds, POWER MAGAZINE

FOR VENDETTA
AN UNCOMPROMISING VISION OF THE FUTURE FROM THE CREATORS OF THE MATRIX TRILOGY

"Spectacular and exhilarating"
Michael Recht VARIETY MAG

"Bold and thoughtful V for Vendetta is a terrific movie. It will challenge and trouble you the way a good piece of speculative fiction should."
Richard Corliss, TIME MAGAZINE

Two thumbs up!
CHRIST & ROEPER

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MTRCB R-18 Strictly for ADULTS No one below 18 yrs old may be admitted

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Everything begins in the mind.

SHARON STONE

BASIC INSTINCT 2

A2

ENTERTAINMENT

Hallmark, HBO woo Pinoys



"EMPIRE"—Hallmark's answer to HBO's "Rome"

HBO AND HALLMARK ARE IN A RATINGS race to win Asia. Top executives of the two movie channels were in Manila recently to announce their latest products.

Andrew Hanna, managing director for Asia-Pacific of Sparrowhawk Media Group (which acquired Hallmark Channel international operations in 2004), said, "This year [for us], it is all about quality drama entertainment."

The lineup of original productions for 2006 includes two best-selling novels adapted to the small screen—"Poseidon Adventure" and "Mysterious Island."

Three other feature films are debuting in the next few months: "Hercules," "Empire" and the futuristic "Supernova."

As for the signature Hallmark drama, there's "Thicker than Water" and "Mom at Sixteen."

Holiday titles are "Back to You and Me" and "Ordinary Miracles."

Hanna also announced that Hallmark has opened an office in Singapore "to concentrate on marketing and communicating with



"LEGENDS of the Fall" is one of HBO's blockbusters.

our audience in Southeast Asia."

According to Hanna, Hallmark is seen in more than 20 million households in the region. Globally, Hallmark channels broadcast in 120 countries to over 110 million subscribers.

Scheduling

HBO goes a step further than producing originals. Caroline Wong, marketing communications director of HBO Asia, introduced the HBO Pak, "three new, 24-hour, commercial-free premium blockbuster movie channels" that will be available in the Philippines starting in April.

Wong explained: "These are not individual channels—they are bundled within the Pak of five, including Cinemax." The three new channels are HBO Signature, HBO Family and HBO Hits.

"With these five," Wong said, "we offer subscribers more premium programming, added value and greater viewing choice."

HBO Signature promises the latest movies and series, including the channel's original productions. HBO Family is "completely dedicated to family-oriented blockbusters." HBO Hits is the most interesting, as it pioneers what Wong described as "cascading" slate.

She explained: "Seven brand-new blockbusters encore throughout the whole week on a rotating schedule, so that if the busy viewer



"All about quality."

misses the 2 p.m. Wednesday screening, for instance, he can catch it on Saturday, 10 p.m."

HBO Signature has a viewer-friendly aspect as well. It introduces Event of the Month, which will showcase an exclusive series scheduled over consecutive nights all the way to its conclusion. Think a whole season of "Six Feet Under" screened in two weeks.

"Ask you cable service providers," Wong said.

ARANETA CENTER

Gateway MALL Farmers Plaza

THE ONLY CINEPLEX IN THE COUNTRY **Gateway Cineplex 10** **DOLBY DIGITAL-EX**

MOMENTS OF LOVE 12:30 / 2:50 / 5:10 / 7:30 / 9:50	LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN 2:30 / 2:50 / 5:10 / 7:30 / 9:50	BASIC INSTINCT 2 1:50 / 4:30 / 7:10 / 9:50	GLOBE PLATINUM CINEMA
JUST FRIENDS 12:20 / 2:30 / 4:40 / 6:50 / 9:00	VENOM 1:40 / 3:40 / 5:40 / 7:40 / 9:40	ICE AGE 2 12:20 / 2:30 / 4:40 / 6:50 / 9:00 HOSTEL 7:30 / 9:40	ICE AGE 2 1:55 / 4:05 / 6:15 / 8:25
NANNY MCPHEE 2:50 / 3:00 / 5:10 SHE'S THE MAN 1:40 / 4:20 / 7:00 / 9:40	V FOR VENDETTA 1:40 / 4:20 / 7:00 / 9:40	ULTRAVIOLET 1:10 / 3:20 / 5:30 / 7:40 / 9:50	ONLY P128 ADMISSION GLOBE PLATINUM P145-P229

MALL CINEMAS

1 MOMENTS OF LOVE 12:00 / 3:10 / 4:40 / 6:20 / 8:40	2 LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN 12:00 / 3:10 / 4:40 / 6:20 / 8:40	3 BASIC INSTINCT 2 12:45 / 3:25 / 6:05 / 8:45
4 ICE AGE 2 12:15 / 3:15 / 5:25 / 7:35	5 VENOM 12:40 / 2:40 / 4:40 / 6:40 / 8:40	DOLBY DIGITAL EX

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MICHAEL BOLTON LIVE IN MANILA MARCH 29, WEDNESDAY 8 pm	SHARON CUNETA MY MEGA VALENTINE - THE REPEAT MARCH 31, FRIDAY 8 pm
--	--

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AN ALL-STAR POWERHOUSE CAST!!!

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star of **BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN**

FEATURING:
The Cousins of **KING KONG**
HARRY THE KARATE CHIMP

ALLEN COVERT
star of **THE LONGEST YARD**

DAVID SPADE
star of **SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE**

ROB SCHNEIDER
star of **DEUCE**

From Producer **ADAM SANDLER**

GRANDMA'S BOY

2ND WEEK

MTRCB R-13 ALL AGES ARE ADMITTED

GLORY ROAD

Distributed by Buena Vista International thru Columbia Pictures

#1 MOVIE in MANILA!

2ND WEEK

LOVE IN DISGUISE

ARE YOU REALLY WHO YOU ARE?

She's THE MAN

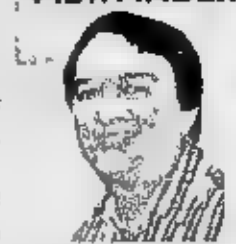
Boob tube boobos

HOST: WHAT IS YOUR WORKING RELATIONSHIP with your wife in your office?

Guest: She really runs the office! After all, as the saying goes, for every man there is be hind a woman!

(At least, he didn't say a woman's behind!)

VIEWFINDER



Nestor U. Torre

Host: Who are the major sponsors of your group's fundraising campaign?

Guest: We have many popular people, but the rich they want to be unknown. (And daw?)

Host: What about the issue of electoral reforms, does it concern you?

Guest: Oh, yes, I'm very disconcerted of this (Isa ka pa!)

Host: So, should the polls be automated? And how should it be done?

Guest: Definitely, it should be. We need to fax-track the process! (So, buy those fax machines, quick!)

Host: How can we speedily solve this case?

Guest: The public has to cooperate and report tips to the police. For this, *handa akong magbigay ng pabuya sa suspect* (Hey, whose side are you on?)

Host: How was your fishing trip last week end, did you catch a lot of fish?

Guest: Not really—*masyadong mabilis tu makbo yung isda* (Must have been a coelacanth...)

Host: How will you get all of the bickering parties to agree to take a common stand?

Guest: All conflicting views can be resolved if we have a round discussion (A round discussion? What happened to the table?)

Host: How can we make sure that our hearts are healthy?

Guest: If you follow the advice of experts, there are many tips you can do to provide you with a long and healthy heart! (We don't really want a long heart, just a healthy one!)

Host: How will you counter all of the charges raised by your rival against you?

Guest: I will file and sue my own case against him! (File and sue? File a suit?—Wherever...)

Host: Many people want you to get married. What's taking you so long?

Guest: Because we don't really need it. *Wala kami ng papel, pero kung legality sa puso, kasal kami!* (Quote, unquote!)

FROM HIS ? BOX

FISHED out of Boy's own box of "Fast Talk" questions in "Private Conversations":

What would a movie on your life be titled?
"Himala ng Isang Geisha"

Who would play you?
Adam Sandler.

Describe your first kiss.
Fast and wet!

If you were not you, who would you like to be?
Paris Hilton!

Has any woman come on to you?
Oh yes! I almost puked.

As a manager and talent: I have no problem there. If a job is being offered to me or my talent, I'll beg off and give the job to my talent. This has happened many times.

As a publicist and social critic: I don't work much as a publicist now. Although I think I made a dent in the industry as a publicist to music superstars.

Because of "Kontrobersyal," I'm involved in the news and current affairs department. I do interviews more than critiques and commentaries. I cannot be a straight newscaster who cannot show his biases.

I don't deny that I have very strong biases. That is a weakness, I must admit.

Do your strong feelings limit you in any way?

I admit there are times when that happens. But in order to verbalize something that I feel very strongly about, I take risks. If you are not appreciated by your bosses simply because you do that, *titimplahin mo*.

That's where your values will come into play. At this point in my career, I'm not too scared about that. I'm more fearless now.

For the longest time, I had to dance to everyone else's music. I was a pleaser, but now, I listen to my heart.



HE says he wouldn't mind doing a talk show "with the fish and the carabao" in Boronggan, Samar, when he retires. Meanwhile, he poses for a snapshot with INQUIRER Guyitos.

Mirror, mirror...

From page A2-8

lives You see, we read so many guidelines for a successful life that we limit the possibilities. That doesn't apply to me.

I will be a geisha, a high flying b---h, good son. I will be whatever. I'm capable of living multiple orgasmic lifetimes (laughs)

Would you go back to anyone of those?

I'm still in them. I'm still connected to who I was 20 years ago. I acknowledge and respect what that life means to me now. I don't deny my past.

When people ask, "Why hosting?" I look back: At the time of [the late] Tita Conchung [Sonico, Metropolitan Theater administrator], whenever we had gala nights at the Metropolitan Theater, I really dressed up. I would ask her, "Tita, can I open [the show] and announce the National Anthem?"

And as an actor, how were you?

I did the award-winning play, "Rehas sa Tubig." It was retitled "Daungan Laot." When I was given the role of the narrator, I was so proud! I found out later, however, that I would not be seen. I played the titular *lumot* (moss) and wore a veil over my head! On the night of the play, at curtain call, I took off the veil!

How many milestones are you celebrating these days?

I just had my 300th interview on "Private Conversations with Boy Abunda." We're celebrating the first anniversary of "Home Boy" and, in May, we will mark the third anniversary of "Kontrobersyal." "The Buzz" will be seven years old in June.

Which one among these shows do you enjoy the most?

Iba'tbang experience. "Home Boy" allows me to be the *probinsyano* that I am. I relate the most to the stories on that show. It allows me to talk about Tatay and him being *anak sa labas* (a child born out of wedlock). I remember that the first time I talked about this, Nanay got angry.

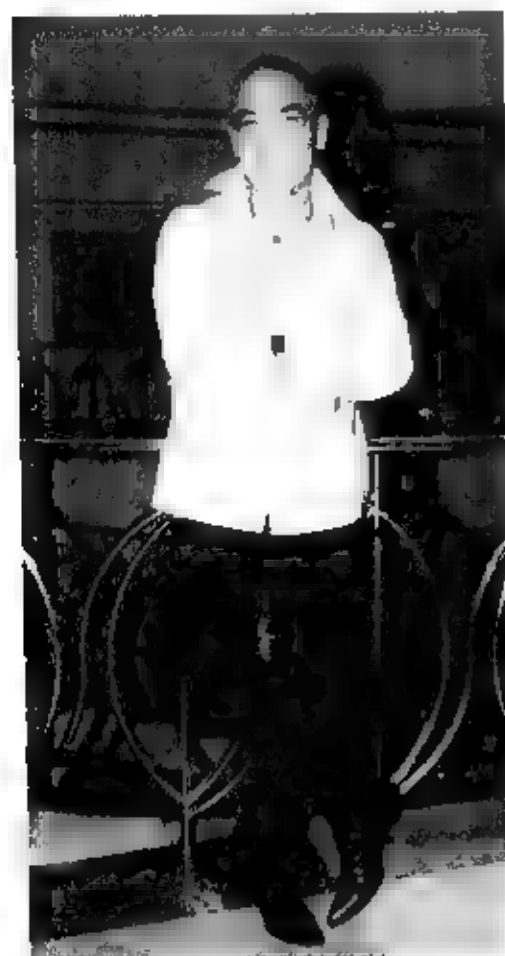
"Private Conversations" is very close to me. It allows me to do a lot of reading, which is my passion.

"Kontrobersyal" allows me to do investigative work and tell the stories of people who are hungry and angry.

"The Buzz" is pure show time. I take a bath, get dressed and go to "The Buzz." That's it.

How do you reconcile your roles as a journalist/newsmaker, manager/talent, publicist/social critic?

That's a very hard question. As a journalist and newsmaker: I don't have a way of reconciling the fact that I make news and deliver it. The conflict arises only with issues that have something to do with interests I protect as a manager and talent. But I'm very open. If I have the temerity to ask a scandalous question once in a while, I should also be ready to answer those same type of questions.



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AN EXTRAORDINARY LOVE STORY

*How does he transcend time lives in the present...
Can love defy the bounds of time?*



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"A well-made commercial film
that is pleasant to look at
and is a grand romance at its best."

Mario Bautista (People's Journal)

"Moments of Love is a movie to be proud of."

Crispina Martinez-Belen (Manila Bulletin)

"The cinematography, the set design,
even the mood of the film contributed heavily
sa taas ng production value."

Dinno Erece (Tumbok)

MTRCB
GENERAL PATRONAGE

ALL AGES ADMITTED

Time MOMENTS ON to 4427 for Smart / Talk 'N Text or 2364 for Globe / Sun



ENTERTAINMENT

Mirror, mirror . . .

Fast talk with the fast-talking Boy Abunda

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ALABANG
Tel No. 850 4285

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2: Born To Kill
3: Moments of Love

4: Ice Age 2

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By the INQUIRER Entertainment staff
Photos by Ryan Lim

YOU DON'T NEED TO ASK A question.

TV host-talent manager-publicist Boy Abunda can conduct a gabfest all by himself.

Whether reminiscing about his salad days in the theater or coming to terms with the inevitable curtain call, he is a gushing font of observations at once insightful and incisive.

You could use the trendy term "life coach" to sum him up but, as

Abunda himself would demur, "I'm too busy living my own life."

Make that several lives in this one incarnation, an existence that could daunt the faint-hearted. The multi-hyphenated, multi-talented Mr. Abunda has plenty of himself to spare.

He's not called "Boy Abundance" for nothing.

TAKE FIVE

You just renewed your contract with ABS-CBN. Are you being paid top money?

I can't complain. I'm paid well enough to enjoy a lifestyle that I hardly get to enjoy. That's the



"WHAT does it mean, to have 'arrived'? You're here today, gone tomorrow."

PHOTOS BY RYAN LIM

irony of it. As I was saying recently to Bong (Quintana, his longtime partner), "Now, that we can afford to go to Hong Kong or Phuket [anytime we want], we don't have the time." I know I'm paid well [because] I'm a talent manager, I know the landscape. I know that jobs are not easy these days.

Tell us about your hungry years.

When my father passed away, I dropped out of school. I asked my mother, "Please allow me to look for a job that I will enjoy."

I worked in a restaurant. I sold fire extinguishers. I sold soap and shampoo. I sold encyclopedias. I did all sorts of things just to survive. Until I made friends with people who were doing street theater at the time. They used to rehearse at the Paco Park.

Then I worked at the Metropolitan Theater. I used to rent a place in Mabini, with bar girls for roommates! Our "bedrooms" were divided only by *mantel* (tablecloth). I stayed there for more than two years. I must have been in my 20s then, but I was no longer a virgin (laughs).

Before I joined the Met's PR department, I was assistant stage manager. My job was to count the props. I was good at it! I'm proud of that. Everybody left work at 7 p.m.; I was there until 12 midnight. Then I became an actor. It was P50 per performance.

Did you enjoy that stint with the Met?

Oh, yeah! [Those were] the best years of my life.

But how difficult was it living in Malate with bar girls?

I didn't think it was difficult at the time because I was having a ball!

When did you realize that you had finally arrived?

I can't say it was an inspired moment. You neither annotate nor rhapsodize on your life. You work hard and suddenly you realize that things are happening that you never even imagined!

When Regine Velasquez was still very new in the business, people behind her shows told her, "You need to hire Boy as publicist!" For me, arrive *na ako na*!

We heard you did your first PR jobs using a typewriter and public phone?

Yes. I had left the Met and already living in an apartment, but I had no phone. My first clients were singers I had worked with at the theater, like Martin (Nievera), Pops (Fernandez) and Zsa Zsa (Padilla). The house with the phone was five doors away. When I said, "Hello, Zsa Zsa," the phone's owner would say, unbelieving, "Uy, Zsa Zsa daw (laughs)?"

Going back to that "arrival" question . . . I'm not saying it out of false humility, but what does it mean, "arrive *ka na*"?

Does it have something to do with how much money you're making? Does it have to do with how many people recognize you on the streets?

There are different benchmarks. But when you're a manager who have seen careers come and go, you're more realistic. You know how temporary that "arrive" moment is. You're here today, gone tomorrow.

Are you prepared for the inevitable?

You don't prepare for being a has-been. It happens to each and every one of us. When you go up, you should also expect to go down. But knowing that this happens softens the blow. It also makes you more cautious, more human, more respectful and makes you work harder.

This is the reason I'm very shy to talk about how big or influential I've become. I'm still too busy running the race.

But that doesn't mean that I don't relish moments of fame. It's fun if you know how to handle it. But it can also be toxic. My exposure in theater, my hungry years and being a manager all help in this aspect.

You said once that you'd gladly return to the province and plant *kamote* when that day comes.

Oh yes! I'm not afraid to go home (to Borongan, Eastern Samar, where he was born and raised) When all of this is done, I will host a talk show with the fish and the carabao and have a good laugh.

Do you sometimes feel you are living so many lifetimes in this one?

Yes. I've never been afraid to live those

MIRROR/A2-7

LAUNCH

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BUSINESS

Editor Raul O. Marcelo • Assistant Editor Corrie S. Narisma

Text as your feedback: inquirer.biz.name@citymessage.com to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart) E-mail: pr_business@inquirer.com.ph

\$200-M subway to link MRT-3, LRT-1

'Grand Central' station to connect Metro with North, South Luzon

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE TRANSPORTATION department is now finalizing the design of the rail system that will link the Edsa-based Metro

Rail Transit Line 3 (MRT-3) with the older Light Rail Transit Line 1 (LRT-1) from North Avenue in Quezon City to Monumento in Caloocan City.

Speaking to reporters recently, Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza said that up to \$200 million would be needed to finance the project's civil works phase.

Dubbed MRT3 Phase 2, the rail link will run for 5.12 kilometers

stretching from the North Avenue MRT station to Roosevelt, Balintawak and Monumento.

The centerpiece of the project will be a rail system that will travel underground in some sections of the northern portions of Edsa to avoid existing obstructions.

"What we intend to do here is [to] go underground," he said. "We will have a subway because of some technical problems."

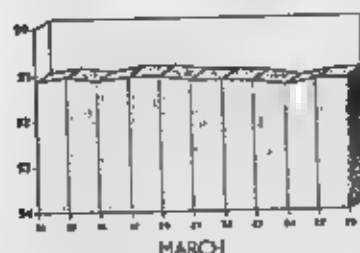
Mendoza said the Department of Transportation and Communications has already hired a consultant, the Louis Berger Group,

which was tasked to submit the project's design before month's end.

Louis Berger is a US-based engineering consultancy firm presently handling major contracts in Iraq and Afghanistan for

\$280-M/BS

INDICATORS CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P 51.135 = \$ 1

As of 5 p.m., March 28, 2006

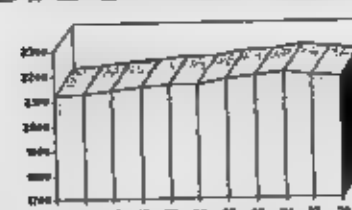
Y 116.80 = \$ 1

As of 5 p.m., March 28, 2006

GOLD: \$565.70-566.20

per ounce Hong Kong, March 28, 2006

STOCK MARKET



(See stock market report on Page B4)

Shares fall for 2nd day

SHARES DECLINED FOR A SECOND day yesterday as investors locked in profits after last week's gains propelled the index to a nearly seven-year high.

The benchmark 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index fell 9.16 points, or 0.4 percent, to 2,186.79, after shedding 0.6 percent Monday. On Friday, the index rose to its best close in nearly seven years, hitting 2,208.13.

"This is part of the correction that we've anticipated, especially after the index hit the psychological mark of 2,200 last week," said AB Capital Securities analyst Erwin Balita. "Investors are also cautious ahead of the Fed meeting."

While financial markets have more or less discounted another 25-basis-point US interest rate increase at the end of the Federal Reserve policy meeting Tuesday, there was un-

SHARES/B4

WHAT'S INSIDE

Public sector deficit seen to drop in '05 /B2

Meralco posted P411-M loss in '05 /B3

Gov't lowers growth target

By Doris C. Dumlaog

THE GOVERNMENT HAS CUT SLIGHTLY ITS economic growth target and at the same time lowered its inflation forecast given the impact of the appreciating peso.

The Cabinet-level Development Budget Coordination Committee approved in a meeting late Monday a slight reduction in the country's gross domestic product growth forecast for 2006 to 5.5-6.2 percent from the earlier range of 5.7-6.3 percent.

Finance Undersecretary Gil Beltran said the slight revision factored in some accounting adjustments on the nominal GDP as well as the expected softening of merchandise export earnings and continuing high oil prices.

But the rising peso, despite some trade-offs in terms of shrinking export margins, is seen to help cap the country's inflation rate this year to 7.3-7.9 percent versus the DBCC's earlier projection of 8-8.5 percent.

The peso, which has appreciated by 6 percent last year and continued to strengthen to three-and-a-half year highs this year, is seen to ease inflationary pressures by lowering the cost of imports.

The increase in the value-added tax rate from 10 to 12 percent starting last February is

GOVT/B5

AyalaLand PREMIER

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'Smart cut Meridian (execs) out of the loop,' says former president

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE MASS RESIGNATION THAT STRUCK Meridian Telekom Inc. earlier this week was due to moves by its new owner, Smart Communications Inc., to isolate the company's old management, according to its recently resigned president.

In a telephone interview with the INQUIRER late Monday night, former Meridian president and CEO Rene dos Remedios said Smart's management immediately moved to cut him and his team out of the loop after the

company was acquired from the family of former Manila Rep. Mark Jimenez.

"We were deprived of our role in Meridian," he said, shedding his earlier non-confrontational statements. "There is great disappointment on my part and Meridian employees as to what happened after the consummation of the purchase."

Smart, the main cellular phone unit of telecommunications giant PLDT, bought Meridian late last year from Jimenez reportedly for \$45 million or about P2.3 billion at current exchange rates.

The deal raised eyebrows among company

insiders as well as analysts who questioned the deal's valuation.

Dos Remedios said he was called to a management committee meeting after the deal was consummated only to be informed that the old management team would no longer be needed.

"[They] told me my key group had no more role in Meridian," he said, adding that PLDT president Napoleon Nazareno asked him to reconsider his decision, but he decided to push ahead with his resignation.

"After we resigned, they offered us severance pay," Dos Remedios said, saying the amount was "substantial." "We refused out of principle."

He complained that he and his team were also being "painted as the bad guys" by the company's new owners.

"It was a matter of honor already," he said.

The other day, a Smart spokesperson attributed the mass resignation to a "difference of opinion" between Meridian's old management and its new owners—a fact stressed by Dos Remedios.

"It's a severe difference of opinion if they don't think my group should be running the business that we built," he said.

Five senior Meridian managers and 35 research and development staffers resigned out of the company's 217-member complement.

Dos Remedios said those who quit with him embodied the company's "heart and vision."

Both PLDT chair Manuel V. Pangilinan and president Napoleon Nazareno did not reply to text queries on the issue although a company spokesman denied that Meridian's old management was treated shabbily.

"We've been very transparent with all parties concerned," Smart spokesman Ramon Isberto said in a telephone interview.

He added that the company would rather "look to the future" rather than "dwell on what happened."

"Clearly, there's been a misunderstanding," he said. "There was a misapprehension of how [they] understood [their] role."

Smart plans to raise its stake in Meridian from 49 percent to 100 percent by the middle of this year, representing a delay in the company's initial end-2005 acquisition timetable.

Meridian provides wireless broadband and data services to small- and medium-scale businesses nationwide. It operates under a legislative franchise and was issued a provisional authority to operate by the NTC.

Landco allots P4.3B for new projects

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

PROPERTY DEVELOPER LANDCO PACIFIC Corp., a subsidiary of Metro Pacific Corp., is setting aside P4.3 billion in the next three years to finance at least four key property projects, company president Alfred Xerez-Burgos Jr. said in a briefing Monday.

Landco is developing Playa Calatagan in Batangas, a seaside beach destination covering 62 hectares envisioned to be the "Boracay" of Luzon.

Landco is also proposing a massive tourism development at the sprawling 400-hectare Villa Escudero in San Pablo City, Laguna, which will house a sanctuary, golf, village and campus districts.

Landco officials earlier projected the company might need between P1 billion and P5 billion for its Villa Escudero development, a joint venture with the Escudero family.

The Montelago project, a 102-hectare property in San Pablo, Laguna, is part of the vast Escudero landholdings. The first phase consists of 33 hectares or 905 residential lots.

Landco will also develop a residential community in Quezon City.

Landco is likewise building a shopping center in Naga City under its Pacific Mall brand. It is teaming up with the Metro Galsano Group for this venture.

Landco has existing Pacific Malls in Nueva Ecija, Lucena and Legazpi.

Landco aims to double its revenues to P4 billion by 2007 and emerge as one of the country's top developers.

STOCKS						VOLUME
	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE			
FINANCIAL						
Abn-Am Bank Inc.	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	2,000	
Bank of the Phil. Islands	35	35.5	34.5	35	147,800	
Bank of the South Seas	82.5	82	82	82	2,272,700	
China Banking Corp.	860	860	875	875	3,200	
Cebu Pacific Air	19	19	19	19	600	
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	0.4	0.4	0.39	0.4	3,870,000	
International Exch. Bank	78	78.5	77.5	78	215,700	
Manila Electric Co. A	29	29	29	29	40,000	
Manila Electric Co. B	39	39.5	38.5	39	1,077,100	
Phil. Savings Bank	36	36	36	36	42,400	
Philippine Trust Co.	42	42	42	42	1,000	
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	13.75	13.75	13.25	13.25	119,900	
Securities Bank Corp.	41	41	41	41	110	
Union Bank of the Phil.	37.5	38.5	37.5	38.5	110	
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS						
Philippine Fund Inc.	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3,000	
First Metro Invest. Corp.	24.5	24.5	24.5	24.5	16,800	
Manila Electric Co. A	31.80	31.80	31.80	31.80	300	
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	157	157	157	157	500	
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2140	2140	2140	2140	3,870	
Wantage Corp.	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	25,670,000	
INDUSTRIAL						
ELECTRICITY, POWER & WATER						
First Gen Corp.	42	44.5	42	44	590,500	
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	46	45	43	43	883,600	
Manila Electric Co. A	13	13	12.75	13	49,100	
Manila Electric Co. B	20.75	20.75	17.5	17.5	75,000	
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.3	6.5	6.4	6.5	9,105,000	
Petron Corp.	4.5	4.55	4.4	4.4	3,093,000	
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.92	0.94	0.92	0.93	370,000	
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO						
CADP Group Corp.	15.5	15.5	15.5	15.5	42,000	
Glendon San Miguel Inc.	15.5	15.5	15.5	15.5	7,100	
Jollibee Foods Corp.	37	37.5	36.5	36.5	84,100	
Panake House Inc.	3.7	3.75	3.7	3.75	30,000	
RFM Corp.	0.69	0.69	0.64	0.64	75,000	
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.24	2.24	2.38	2.38	596,000	
Swire Corp. Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	70,000	
San Miguel Corp. A	60	60.5	60	60.5	121,300	
San Miguel Corp. B	82.5	82.5	81.5	81.5	3,430,000	
Universal Robina Corp.	17.5	17.5	17.5	17.5	200,000	
Vitacorn Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	200,000	
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES						
Southeast Asian Cement	0.3	0.31	0.3	0.31	8,840,000	
Engineering Equip. Inc.	1.48	1.5	1.44	1.46	1,733,300	
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	825,000	
CHEMICALS						
Manubay Vinyl Corp.	0.78	0.79	0.75	0.75	80,000	
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS						
Global Equities Inc.	0.07	0.07	0.0675	0.07	1,500,000	
Picop Resources Inc.	0.0775	0.0775	0.075	0.0775	800,000	
Stanley Manufacturing	0.58	0.58	0.58	0.58	180,000	
HOLDING FIRMS						
Abacus Con Res & Hldg A	0.007	0.0075	0.007	0.0075	34,000,000	
Abacus Con Res & Hldg B	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	5,000,000	
Ayala Corp.	36.5	36.5	36.5	36.5	295,000	
Ayala Land Inc.	5.1	5.1	5.1	5.1	100,000	
Abacus Con Res & Hldg A	0.024	0.024	0.024	0.024	88,000	
A. Soriano Corp.	2.44	2.46	2.46	2.46	1,300,000	
APC Group Inc.	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	8,000,000	
Abacus Gold Res. Corp.	0.91	0.91	0.89	0.89	250,000	
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	8.7	8.7	8.7	8.7	7,000	
Bacotran Cons Indus Inc	3.1	3.12	3.1	3.1	4,370,000	
Bignores Holdings Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	1,200,000	
Delft Holdings Inc.	63	63	63	63	500	
Fluorine Dev. Corp.	1.28	1.3	1.28	1.3	525,000	
Global Business Hldgs Inc.	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	1,820,000	
H. G. Summit Holdings Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	3,010,000	
Renal Holdings	0.93	0.93	0.93	0.93	50,000	
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	50,000	
Gold Group Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	2,100,000	
South China Resources Inc.	0.71	0.71	0.71	0.71	200,000	
South China Resources Inc.	0.13	0.13	0.12	0.13	8,350,000	
PROPERTY						
Ayala Land Inc.	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	9,182,900	
Ayala Properties Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	1,450,000	
Belle Corp.	1.18	1.18	1.12	1.12	6,650,000	
Cebu Pacific Air	0.3	0.3	0.29	0.29	3,050,000	
Cebu Pacific Air	1.82	1.82	1.82	1.82	2,293,000	
Cebu Pacific Air	1.88	1.88	1.88	1.88	30,000	
Cebu Pacific Air	0.215	0.215	0.21	0.21	1,540,000	
Cebu Pacific Air	0.68	0.68	0.68	0.68	44,080	
Cebu Pacific Air	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	1,200,000	
Cebu Pacific Air	0.71	0.71	0.71	0.71	71,800	
Cebu Pacific Air	0.0048	0.0048	0.0048	0.0048	11,000,000	
Cebu Pacific Air	0.225	0.225	0.225	0.225	970	
Cebu Pacific Air	0.59	0.59	0.59	0.59	2,933,000	
Cebu Pacific Air	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	7,520,000	
Cebu Pacific Air	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	30,000	
Cebu Pacific Air	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	50,000	
Cebu Pacific Air	0.32	0.32	0.31	0.31	11,560,000	
Cebu Pacific Air	1.58	1.58	1.58	1.58	118,000	
Cebu Pacific Air	0.79	0.79	0.79	0.79	5,520,000	
Cebu Pacific Air	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	330,000	
MEDIA						
ASS-CBM Broadcasting Corp.	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	20,400	
TELECOMMUNICATIONS						
Digital Telecom Phil Inc	1.02	1.04	0.70	0.85	4,099,000	
Globe Telecom Inc	870	890	870	885	1,500,000	
Philippine Tel. Corp.	3	3	2.9	2.9	4,185,000	
Phil. Long Dis. Tel. Co.	1890	1900	1890	1900	119,120	
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY						
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.19	0.2	0.19	0.195	3,260,000	
Info and Tech Inc.	0.047	0.047	0.047	0.047	14,450,000	
ISM Communications Corp.	0.0525	0.0525	0.0525	0.0525	60,000	
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.12	1.12	1.1	1.12	1,176,800,000	
Philweb Corp.	0.022	0.022	0.021	0.028	453,000	
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES						
Asien Terminals Inc.	2.06	2.12	2.06	2.12	33,013,600	
Int'l Container Term 1st	11.25	11.25	11.25	11.25	2,000	
Luzon Shipping Corp.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1,310,000	
HOTEL & LEISURE						
Acacia Hotel Corp.	3.35	3.35	3.35	3.35	1,283,000	
Acacia Hotel Corp.	1.86	1.86	1.86	1.86	1,580,000	
Acacia Hotel Corp.	0.46	0.47	0.44	0.44	147,000	
EDUCATION						
People Inc.	3.15	3.15	3.15	3.15	2,588,000	
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES						
Macro Asia Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	253,000	
Parsons Inc.	0.92	0.98	0.92	0.98	20,000	
Philcomat Holdings Corp.	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.1	1,744,000	
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	1.35	1.35	1.3	1.3	577,200	
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	56,000,000	
Apex Mining Co. Inc. C	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	3,669,000	
Apex Mining Co. Inc. D	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	10,000	
Apex Mining Co. Inc. E	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	4,440,000	
Apex Mining Co. Inc. F	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	1,000,000	
Apex Mining Co. Inc. G	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	198,000	
Apex Mining Co. Inc. H	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	5,400,000	
Apex Mining Co. Inc. I	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	55,000,000	
Apex Mining Co. Inc. J	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	22,878,000	
Apex Mining Co. Inc. K	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	23,361,000	
Apex Mining Co. Inc. L	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	1,000	
Apex Mining Co. Inc. M	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	1,280,000	
OIL						
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	1,420,000	
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	284,000,000	
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	83,000,000	
The Philodrell Corp. A	0.52	0.52	0.5	0.52	240,000	
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.7	27,000	
PREFERRED						
PLDT 10% Pref Series M	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	2,000	
PLDT 10% Pref Series N	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	2,000	
PLDT 10% Pref Series O	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	100	
PLDT 1	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	3,000	
PLDT 10% Pref Series L	11	11	11	11	1,600	
PLDT 10% Pref Series V	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,600	
PLDT 10% Pref Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,600	
PLDT 10% Pref Series A	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,600	
WARRANTS, PREFERRED RECEIPTS, ETC.						
ASS-CBM Hldgs. Corp. (PDR)	11.75	11.75	11.5	11.5	36,000	

Toyota seeks to grow ranks of skilled auto workers

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

THE LACK OF EXPERTS IN THE specialized field of automotive repair and maintenance has long plagued the industry, but Toyota Motor Philippines Foundation Inc. seeks to provide a long-term solution through its market-driven scholarship program.

Under the scholarship program, underprivileged youth are taught skills and provided training that would make them employable in the automotive industry, not just Toyota, upon graduation.

TMPF president David Go said in an interview that the scholarship program not only benefits the students, but the companies as well.

Go explained that the program provides companies such as Toyota, including their extensive dealer networks, a steady stream of graduates with the right qualifications to help keep operations going.

There are currently 12 vocational partner schools providing a pipeline of skilled, talented and employable manpower to Toyota Motor Philippines and its network of more than 23 dealers.

Toyota provides the engines and the curriculum that the students can work on, while the partner schools take care of im-



FUTURE automotive experts learn the basics from the Toyota scholarship program.

plementing the curriculum and actually training the students.

Partner schools include the Mariano Marcos State University in Laoag, Ilocos Norte; Technological Institute, Don Bosco College-Cantubang, Alcantara National Trade School in Rombon and Xavier University in Cagayan de Oro City.

Since the program was imple-

mented, more than 400 of the vocational scholars have been employed by the Toyota network.

Other graduates have either moved on to other careers or put up their own businesses, using training that they got through Toyota's Youth Business Camps.

Toyota believes that not all are meant for employment, thus,

should be provided skills to enable them to go out on their own.

Not content with just churning automotive technical/vocational graduates, Toyota last year took the next step by introducing the Expanded Tertiary Education, Equivalency and Accreditation Program in partnership with the Mapua Institute of Technology.

The program is intended to provide the opportunity to both Toyota scholars and employees

the chance to earn a college/university degree in Automotive Engineering while working with Toyota.

The curriculum developed with Mapua is unique as it integrates Toyota principles and philosophies and recognizes the value of the actual work experiences and seminars undergone by the Toyota scholars or employees.

TMPF education sector head Ramon Ventura Jr. said the Automotive Engineering program would enable Toyota to develop people with a higher set of skills that would ultimately redound to the benefit of the company.

"This is part of our philosophy to improve ourselves and to continue professionalizing our ranks," Ventura said.

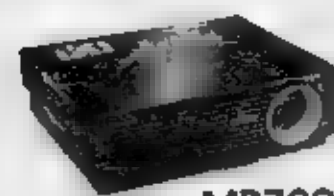
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Rewards, layoffs await revenue collecting agencies, Teves says

CLARK SPECIAL ECONOMIC Zone—They either get 20 percent of the excess collections or be laid off from work.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said here last week that such incentive or penalty awaits personnel of the bureaus of internal revenue, customs and treasury charged with meeting targets as government implements the lateral attrition law (Republic Act No. 9335).

Teves said that while revenue collection employees were entitled to get rewards, their poor performance could lead to their being "frozen, relieved or altogether moved out of service after due process."

The Bureau of Internal Revenue set

a collection goal of P675 billion for 2006; the Bureau of Customs, P190 billion; and the Bureau of Treasury, P51.9 billion.

Teves said the law, which was approved in 2005, was already being followed. It aims to improve the revenue collection performance of the BIR and BOC through the creation of a rewards and incentives fund and of a revenue performance evaluation board.

A congressional oversight committee, he said, would approve the law's implementing rules and regulations.

Comparing the January-February figures for 2005 and 2006, Teves said BIR's collections increased from

P73.7 billion to P91.2 billion, and BOC's from P19.8 billion to P25.6 billion. It is only the Bureau of Treasury's collections that fell by 1.5 percent from P12.7 billion to P12.6 billion.

Revenues in 2005, at P795.7 billion, were up 13.7 percent from 2004, he said.

He said the directions this year were focused on intensifying tax administration and collection efficiency, improving debt management and strengthening the management and self-reliance of government-owned and controlled corporations, financing institutions, social insurance systems and local governments. Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Liaison Desk

Gov't lowers ... \$200-M subway to link MRT-3, LRT-1

From page B1

seen contributing to inflationary pressures particularly in the first semester, but based on the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' projections, the rise in consumer prices should taper off in the second semester.

However, a softer growth of 8 percent is expected from export earnings against earlier expectations of a 10 percent expansion.

A continued improvement in the government's fiscal performance is also seen driving interest rates lower based on the belated 91-day Treasury bill rates, or to an average of 6.8-7.5 percent from the earlier forecast of 7.5-8.5 percent.

Average crude oil cost, a major factor behind the rise in the inflation rate, is seen to hover at \$62 a barrel this year, further rising from the old forecast of \$56-60.

Meanwhile, the more bearish outlook for exports factored in the sluggish demand for electronics, account for 60 percent of total export receipts.

Despite the weaker trade position expected for this year and next year, the BSP expects the current account to remain in a surplus, resulting in a balance-of-payments surplus of about \$1.6 billion this year.

From page B1

the American government.

Once completed, Mendoza said the Monumento station would become the central railway station linking LRT-1 with MRT-3 and the planned North Rail project that will connect Metro Manila with Bulacan province.

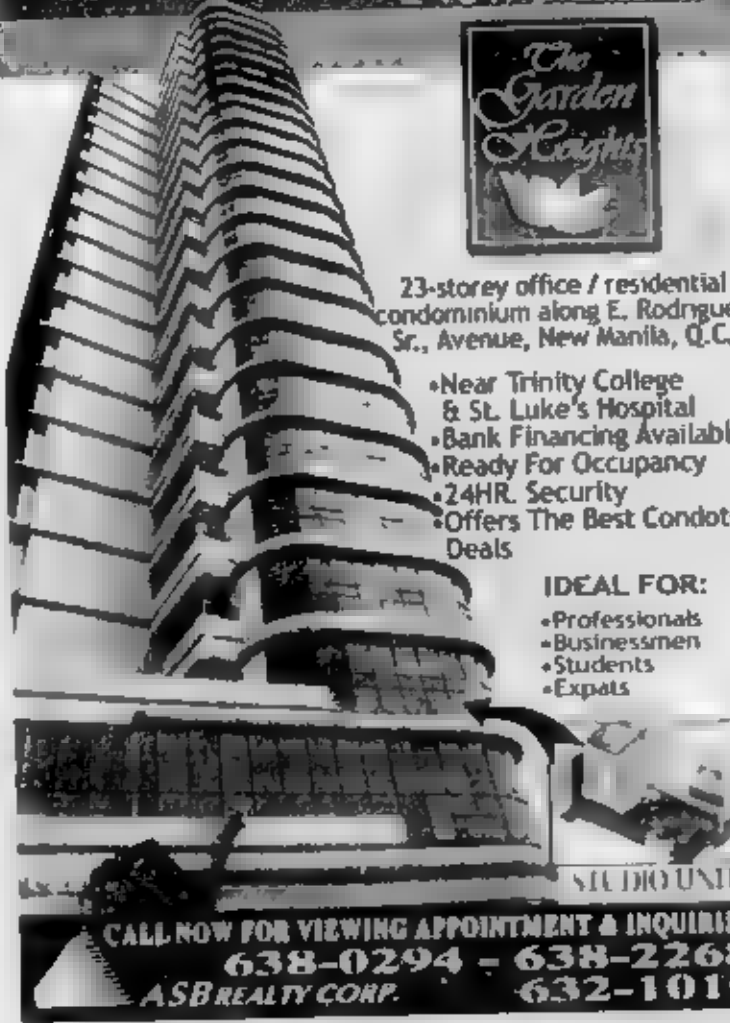
Eventually, the planned South Rail system that will link Metro Manila with the rest of southern Luzon will also have its terminal at the Monumento station, which Mendoza described as the future

"Grand Central" station of the country.

Once Louis Berger has submitted its design proposal, the bidding process for the project would follow, he said.

At present, the MRT-3 system is linked by pedestrian access in Cubao with the LRT Line-2, which travels the Recto-Santolan route. A pedestrian link also connects the LRT-1 to the LRT 2 at the Doroteo Jose station. A similar pedestrian link connects MRT-3 with the LRT 1 at the Taft-Edsa stations of both systems.

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Augusto Carlos Valdes Camara

(September 24, 1978 - March 17, 2006)

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord on March 17, 2006

Beloved son of Jorge and Binky

Beloved grandson of Augusto and Felicing Camara
Carlos and Aida (†) Valdes

Beloved nephew of: Sylvia, Crissie, Ricky, Philip,
Mike, Leo, Pinky, Joey, Mandy, Lisa & Martin,
Gabby, Butch, Nena, Chona, Johnny, Teri, Barry,
Gina, Benjie (†), Regina

A memorial mass will be held on Saturday April 1, 2006 at
3:30pm at the Urdaneta Village Friendship Hall. Prayers
and masses for the eternal repose of his soul will be
appreciated.

Emilio J. Aguila

(of San Jose, Batangas and
a devotee of the Divine Mercy)

*Died in the Grace of our Lord
on March 27, 2006 at the age of 96.*

His children Cynthia, Enya, Butch and Kiddy;
grandchildren Steve, Joanne, Richard and
Cristina; and great-grandchild Erin request their
friends to join them in prayers. In lieu of flowers,
please donate instead to charitable institutions for
the poor.

His remains lie in state at the Don Bosco Church
along Pasay Road, Makati City. Interment will be
on Friday, March 31, 2006 at the Manila Memorial
Park in Parañaque City after the 8:30 A.M. Mass
at Don Bosco.



The Provincial Government of Bulacan
headed by Governor Josefina Mendoza-Dela Cruz,
and the Sangguniang Panlalawigan
headed by Vice-Governor Aurelio S. Plamenko,
the Board Members, Officials, and Employees

mourn the early demise of their Beloved

HON. WARLITO G. TRINIDAD

of
Santol, Balagtas, Bulacan
Born: December 5, 1964 • Died: March 24, 2006

Board Member, 2nd District - Bulacan 2004-2006
Former Vice-Mayor, Municipality of Balagtas 2001-2004
Former Councilor, Municipality of Balagtas 1998-2001

His remains lie at their residence in
87 Jordan Valley Subdivision, Santol,
Balagtas, Bulacan. His body will be
transferred to the Provincial Capitol
of Bulacan, Malolos City for vigil &
necrological services on March 31, 2006
at 2:00 p.m. to April 1st 2006, 12:00 noon.

Interment will be on April 1st 2006
at the Doña Encarnacion Memorial Park,
Wawa, Balagtas after the 2:00 p.m. Mass
at San Lorenzo Parish Church, Poblacion,
Balagtas, Bulacan.



In
Loving
Memory
Of



FELIX ORDAS ALFELOR SR.

Outstanding Governor, Province of Camarines Sur 1970 - 72
Founder, University of Northeastern Philippines
On his

25th Death Anniversary, **March 30, 2006**
94th Birth Anniversary, May 2, 2006

Schedule of Requiem Masses offered for the Eternal Repose of the soul of (†) Felix Sr.
(March 30, 2006).

University Divine Mercy Chapel	3:00 p.m.
UNEP, Iriga City	
Our Lady of Mount Carmel	6:30 a.m.
Concepcion Pequena, Naga City	
St. Anne Basilica	8:30 a.m. (Phil. Time)
Scranton, Pennsylvania, U.S.A.	Over Family Land TV Channel
St. Anthony of Padua Parish	7:00 a.m.
Iriga City	
Our Lady of Salvation Parish	7:00 a.m.
Salvacion, Iriga City	
Our Lady of Fatima Shrine	6:30 a.m.
San Isidro, Iriga City	
Our Lady of Sorrow Parish	6:30 a.m.
Sto. Domingo, Iriga City	
St. Therese of Lisieux Parish	6:15 a.m.
Sta. Teresita, Iriga City	
Holy Cross Parish	6:30 a.m.
Nabua, Cam. Sur	
Holy Trinity Parish	7:00 a.m.
Bato, Cam. Sur	
St. Therese of Avila Parish	6:00 a.m.
Bato, Cam. Sur	
Our Lady of Prompt Succor Parish	6:00 a.m.
Haring, Canaman, Cam. Sur	
St. Francis of Assisi Parish	6:00 a.m.
Buhi, Cam. Sur	

We, Dr. Remedios R. Alfelor and children, Ex-Congressman Ciriaco (†) nee: Alma Yorobe, Congressman
Felix Jr. nee: Emma Garchitorena, Dr. Filipinas, Eleanor, Delicia and Arch. Eduardo Tibi, Ex-Mayor
Emmanuel, Ariel nee: Ida Lee, Dr. Rupert nee: Jina-Luz Zamudio and grandchildren: Dr. Tshombe;
Mayor Madel and Bong Gazmen, Atty. Peachy and Mon Moraleda; and all grandchildren and great grand-
children request all his loved ones, relatives, friends and pious readers to join us in prayers for his bliss and
eternal rest.

We would like to thank everyone, who in one way was touched by the meaningful life of (†) Felix Sr.

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ATTY. DULCE MARIE MAGSAMBOL-FADRI

*Peacefully joined our Lord on March 26, 2006
at the age of 48.*

Her loving husband, Jose Jr. and daughter Desiree,
mother Violeta, brothers, Boyet, Benjie, Andy, Ernie
and FM, nephews and nieces, in-laws, other relatives
and friends request the pious readers to pray for the
eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at Capilla Del Senor, Santuario De
San Antonio, McKinley Road, Forbes Park, Makati City

Interment will be on Friday, March 31, 2006 at
The Heritage Park, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, after the
9:00 a.m. Mass at Capilla Del Senor at Santuario
De San Antonio Parish.

"...absent
from the
body
to be
present
with the
Lord."

2 Corinthians 5:8

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Message of Thanks

We, the family of the late

Evelyn Ongsansoy-Marcelo

wish to convey our deepest appreciation to all of you, our relatives and friends, who spent precious time with us, sent flowers, mass cards, gave donations, or in some other way expressed your love, concern and support in celebrating Evelyn's coming home to her Creator.

*I have fought the good fight,
I have finished the race, I have kept the faith
(2 Timothy 4)*

ESTRELLA MERCADO HIZON

of Apalit, Pampanga and La Loma, Quezon City

has peacefully joined her Creator on March 27, 2006

Her beloved sister Flora; deceased brothers and sisters Fernando, Ricardo, Gloria, Virgilio, Arturo, Benjamin and Perla; nieces, nephews and grandchildren; brother and sisters-in-law, other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Chapel K, Funeraria Paz, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City. Interment will be on Thursday morning, March 30 at the La Loma Cemetery.

"...absent from the body
...present with the Lord."

II Cor 5:8

Beatriz Mendez Livio

(Tita Betty)

went home to be with her Saviour,
on the 27th of March 2006 at the age of 75.

She will be missed by her husband Atty. Enrique; children: Butch-Nestor, Elizabeth, Maria Jovita, Rev. Dr. Roberto Jose and Mario Adriano; in-laws: Renee, Estee, Frank, Imelda and Fatima; grandchildren, great grandchildren and other relatives and friends.

Her body lies in state at Chapels 1 & 2, Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City.

Necrological services shall be on Thursday, March 30, 2006 at 7:00 p.m. Interment shall be on Friday, March 31, 2006 at 10:00 a.m. at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City.



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NAME OF DECEASED	PLACE OF SERVICE	DATE & TIME	INTERMENT/CREMATION PLACE
Concepcion F. Bundang	Chapel B, Q.C.	3/30/06; 9:00 a.m.	Holy Cross
Ricardo P. De Gola	Chapel B-4, Q.C.	4/01/06; 2:00 p.m.	Holy Cross
Romulo Saradilla Reyes	Chapel C-12, Q.C.	3/30/06; 1:00 p.m.	North Cemetery

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**OBITUARY
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- Copy of Death Certificate
- Any identification document (I.D.)

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Message of Thanks

The family of the late

FLORANTE B. MAYOR

who passed away in the Grace of our Lord on March 22, 2006

wish to express our heartfelt gratitude and sincerest appreciation to all those who offered their masses and prayers, sent flowers and messages of sympathy and who in countless ways, consoled with and comforted us in our hour of bereavement

Ernesto L. Garcia, Sr.

"Ernie"

*Peacefully joined our Lord
on March 26, 2006 at the age of 63.*

His wife Nellie Soller; his children and spouses Don & Milette Poe, Erdie & Gina Tanjanco, Jewel & Kevin Nguyen, Jarie & Mary Faye Rodriguez and Carmela; grandchildren EJ, Mandi, Trixi, Lizzi, Fern, Chino, Miggy, Txabi, Montse, Sofie, Bernice, Gabrielle, Sasha & Yana; brothers & sisters Rody & Nancy, Baby & Sonny (t) & Jojo; mother-in-law Fely Soller; relatives & friends join in prayer for his eternal repose in heaven.

His body lies at Mount Carmel Church, New Manila, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Sunday, April 2, 2006 after the 1:00 p.m. Mass at The Heritage Park, Fort Bonifacio.



"Gone... But Will Never Be Forgotten"

EDR 3-26

ANTONIO C. DAYRIT, JR.

December 15, 1962 - March 26, 2006

His wife Mabel Dionisia Comia; children Simon Gabriel and Juno Abel; parents Antonio (t) and Lily; brothers and sisters Bart, Cristina, Fran and Baby; in-laws; nieces and nephews; relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Mortuary of Sacred Heart Parish Church, Sgt. Ybardolaza St., Kamuning, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Friday, March 31, 2006 at La Loma Cemetery after the 8:00 a.m. Mass.

CLASSIFIEDS**NOTICE**

Notice to the public of the expiration on December 31, 2005 of the marketing agency agreement with respect to the real property located at 74 EDSA, Mandaluyong City ("Property") between Sterling Products International Inc and related entities, as principal, and Pronove Tai & Associates, as agent, is hereby made. From the said date, Pronove Tai & Associates has ceased to be authorized to offer the Property for sale.

(PDI - March 29 & 30, 2006)

February 14, 2006 NFA continues to stabilize rice supply and prices thru rice outlets nationwide

THE NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY HAS accredited at least 26,112 individual rice retailers nationwide as of December last year, indicating another stable year for rice at the barangay level in 2006.

Of the total number of rice retailers, 11,379 individual retailers are located inside markets while the remaining 14,733 are outside markets.

The food agency, meanwhile, has deployed 236 units of NFA rolling stores to sell NFA rice, sugar and other grocery items at subsidized prices.

In 2005 alone, the NFA has sold a total of 747,758 bags of rice through these rolling stores.

NFA rolling stores are being deployed in depressed communities nationwide to sell affordable rice and other basic commodities to the country's poorest of the poor.

The NFA was also able to put up 76 stationary outlets in so-called 15 hotspot areas in Metro Manila as instructed by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in 2005.

In addition to these outlets, the NFA has also established a total of 2,601 Bigasang A Palengke outlets nationwide which exclusively sell NFA rice. A total of 7,282,591 bags of rice were sold through these BGP outlets.

The NFA has also set up Tindahan Natin outlets in poverty-stricken areas in Metro Manila which sell rice at P18 per kilogram and fortified noodles at P4.25 per pack. This is being jointly implemented with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and the local government units.

The NFA will soon establish Tindahan Natin outlets nationwide.

For more information on NFA programs, the public may send their concerns via the Text NFA Program through mobile number 0917-6210927.

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- With a good command of conversational English & Tagalog
- Pleasing voice and personality

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- Experience in Attendance, SSS, Pag-ibig & Philhealth recording will be preferred but not required

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**PGMA AWARDS CERTIFICATE TO OPERATE TINDAHAN NATIN**

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo hands to Maria Ilot, president of the Sambayanang Kristiano at Sitio Puting Bato in North Bay Boulevard South, Navotas the Certificate to Operate a Tindahan Natin outlet. One of the components of the 'Serbisyo Muna!', the Tindahan Natin will be established in depressed barangays nationwide to provide low-income families a permanent and reliable access to essential goods at discounted prices. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) determines the areas and operators of the Tindahan Natin which the NFA will accredit and supply with affordable rice to be sold at P18 per kg. With the President in photo are Congressman Ricky Sandoval of Navotas (left) and NFA Administrator Gregorio Y. Tan, Jr. (extreme right).



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Temasek buys into StanChart

SINGAPORE—SINGAPORE'S TEMASEK Holdings purchased a minority stake worth \$4 billion in Standard Chartered—probably paying top dollar for the most expensive bank listed on the London stock exchange—as the state investor increased its bet on Asia's strong economic growth.

The secretive investment firm, which is headed by Ho Ching, the wife of Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, has bought stakes in several Asian banks, committing some \$4.5 billion to buy shares in state-owned Bank of China and Construction Bank of China in the second half of 2005.

The deal for Asia-focused StanChart brings Temasek's total investments in the banking sector to around \$22 billion. Temasek's total portfolio was valued at \$64 billion at the end of its last financial year in March 2005.

StanChart's shares in Hong Kong fell nearly 3 percent to HK\$203 by mid-afternoon on Tuesday, and tumbled more than 2 percent in early trade in London.

Temasek announced late on Monday that it had agreed to buy an 11.55 percent

stake in StanChart from the estate of late banking tycoon Khoo Teck Piat at an undisclosed price.

Simon Israel, an executive director at Temasek, told the daily Business Times that the deal, which is subject to regulatory approvals, was a private transaction and neither party was under any obligation to disclose the price.

Temasek's stake in StanChart was worth 2.3 billion pounds (\$4 billion), based on Monday's closing share price of 15.24 pounds.

Analysts said they expect Temasek to continue targeting the financial sector, a good proxy for booming economies, and added it could be interested in LG Card, South Korea's number two credit card issuer, which is up for sale.

StanChart shares have soared 62 percent in the last 12 months, benefiting from its exposure to high-growth economies and takeover speculation, and trade at 3.69 times their historical book value, according to Reuters data, making it the most expensive London-listed bank. **Reuters**

ADB urges emerging Asia to prepare for dollar fall

TOKYO—ASIAN COUNTRIES NEED to prepare for a possible sharp fall in the dollar and should allow their currencies to appreciate collectively in the event of such a decline, a senior official of the Asian Development Bank said on Tuesday.

Masahiro Kawai, head of the ADB's office of regional economic integration, said the chances of a rapid fall in the dollar were still small, but it could cause a significant turmoil in Asia if it takes place.

"If the US dollar goes down in the future, it would be best for East Asian countries to allow appreciation collectively," Kawai told a group of journalists in Tokyo. That way, the cost of letting their currencies appreciate could be divided among them, he said.

Kawai later said that by East Asia, he meant emerging East Asian coun-

tries, excluding Japan. He did not name specific countries.

Asked about the level of the ADB's concerns about a sharp fall in the dollar, Kawai said: "I don't think the possibility is high."

"But it is like avian flu. The possibility of avian flu spreading all over Asia or the world is limited, but once it spreads, it would have tremendous impact."

Kawai said the ADB's planned establishment of a theoretical Asian currency unit (Adu), comprising a basket of Asian currencies, will help monitor collective movements of regional currencies against the dollar.

He added that a sharp decline in the dollar, which could result from any shock to the US economy and disorderly adjustments of global imbalances, would harm trade in Asia and

reduce the value of dollar-denominated assets in the foreign reserves of Asian countries. Kawai called for more flexibility in the currencies of Asian economies, though he did not point to any particular country.

"One issue is whether continuing to accumulate foreign reserves would be a good strategy or not... If a particular country tries to avoid appreciation (of its currency), it would be better for the country to let the currency be more flexible from now, rather than accumulating foreign reserves." The ADB has said allowing greater exchange flexibility in emerging East Asia would lessen the need for foreign exchange reserve accumulation by central banks and thus help contribute to an orderly resolution of global balance of payments imbalance. **Reuters**



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Closing date: 17 April 2006

Interviews : 4 May 2006

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If you are interested in applying for this post, please access a job pack from the VSO Philippines website—<http://www.geocities.com/vsophilippines>. The website includes the VSO standard application form, person specification and the job description. Please download the application form. WE WILL ONLY CONSIDER APPLICATIONS IN ELECTRONIC FORM. Forms must be submitted no later than 12:30 hrs. 17 April 2006.



Flight and airport operations began recently at Singapore's new airport terminal designed to serve no-frills airlines, just three days after neighboring Malaysia unveiled Asia's first budget terminal, home to Asia's largest no-frills carrier, AirAsia. **AP**

Asia stocks up; US dollar steadies

SINGAPORE—ASIAN STOCK MARKETS made modest gains on Tuesday as investors waited for the first policy decision of the Federal Reserve under chairman Ben Bernanke and, more importantly, clues on the outlook for

US interest rates.

Gold held above \$566 an ounce, even as the dollar recouped some early losses, while oil stayed just above \$64 a barrel as threats of attacks on oil facilities in Nigeria put a floor under prices.

The Fed is expected to lift US interest rates to 4.75 percent from 4.5 percent later on Tuesday, in what would be the 15th increase in as many meetings dating back to June 2004.

More important for markets are what signals the central bank might send on future rate moves, amid speculation that US interest rates may be nearing a peak.

"The market could react if the statement indicates in any way that the tightening cycle is winding down," said Shigeru Komatsu, forex dealer at Sunamotom Trust and Banking. "But the possibility that the Fed will say anything that will shake up the market is very low." Tokyo's benchmark Nikkei average ended up 0.24 percent at 16,690.24, its highest close since Feb. 7, and MSCI's index of non-Japan Asian shares was up 0.4 percent yesterday afternoon.

Traders buying most Nikkei component stocks on Tuesday can not claim dividend rights for this fiscal year, which ends on Friday. Without that incentive, some traders moved to lock in profits.

South Korea's shares reversed morning falls to end 0.1 percent stronger, while Taiwan shares ended up 0.5 percent, with technology shares in both markets among the gainers.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng index gained 0.4 percent in its morning session.

Australian shares hit a new intraday peak before ending down 0.05 percent—snapping a run that had seen them set record closing highs in each of the previous sessions.

The index has risen 6.8 percent this year, with a third of that increase coming in the six trading days to Monday's close. **Reuters**

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
PNOC-Energy Development Corporation (PNOC-EDC) invites interested contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the project:

TWO (2) YEAR RENTAL OF 3 UNITS PASSENGER VAN FOR BACMAN GEOTHERMAL PRODUCTION FIELD (SGPF) EDC 06-011

The Approved Budget is P=3,540,000.00 to be charged against PNOC-EDC fund. The contract duration is Two (2) years.

Application forms for eligibility and the bidding documents may be secured from the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group, Fort Bonifacio (c/o M. P. Calang) and PNOC-EDC/BGPF, Bonga Socogon (c/o M. G. R. Yemal) starting March 23, 2006 upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Pesos: Five Hundred (P=500.00).

For the purpose of clarifying certain issues, a pre-bid conference will be held on April 6, 2006, 2:30 p.m. at PNOC-EDC BGPF, Bonga, Socogon. Site inspection will follow thereafter.

Applications for Eligibility and sealed bids shall be received by the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group at PNOC-EDC, 1st Floor Building 5, Fort Bonifacio Taguig City, Metro Manila, not later than 2:00 p.m. on April 19, 2006 (Contracts Administration Group Office Wall Clock Time) and shall be publicly opened immediately thereafter.

PNOC-EDC reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any informality therein, to accept such bids or to award any part of the work to any bidder whose bid is considered most advantageous to PNOC-EDC.

(Sgd.) FRANCIS M. DOLOR
BAC Chairman

(PDI March 23 & 24, 2006)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
SECURITIES & EXCHANGE COMMISSION
SEC Building, EDSA, Greenhills
City of Mandaluyong, Metro Manila

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Securities and Exchange Commission, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites qualified local bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for the SECURITY SERVICES Contract for 2006 for the SEC Main Office, SEC Building, EDSA, Greenhills, Mandaluyong City. The Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) for ten (10) guards per shift in three (3) shifts, is FIVE MILLION NINE HUNDRED FOUR THOUSAND PESOS (5,804,000.00). The contract duration shall be for the period of one (1) year.

a. Corporation duly organized under the laws of the Philippines, and of which at least seventy five percent (75%) of the outstanding capital stock belongs to citizen of the Philippines; or

b. Bidder should have a valid and current license issued by PNP; and

c. Must have at least ten (10) years continuous operation.

A complete set of bidding documents may be obtained by the eligible bidder starting March 28 to April 10, 2006 at the General Services Division, 4th floor, SEC Building, EDSA, Greenhills, Mandaluyong City, upon presentation of original PNP License to Operate and a payment of a non-refundable fee of Two Thousand Pesos (P2,000.00). For further details, please contact Asst. Director Romeo O. Causig at Tel. No. 727-3320. Only those bidders who purchased the Bid Documents are allowed to attend the Pre-Bid Conference.

Pre-Bid conference will be on April 10, 2006, 10:00 A.M. at the Hearing Room No. 2, Compliance and Enforcement Department (CED), 5th Floor SEC Building.

Deadline for submission of bids will be on April 28, 2006, 2:00 P.M. at the General Services Division, 4th floor, SEC Building and immediately thereafter. The opening of bids will be held at the Hearing Room No. 2 Compliance and Enforcement Department (CED), 5th Floor, SEC Building. Bids submitted after 2:00 P.M. will no longer be accepted.

Republic Act 9154, and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) shall govern all particulars relative to Eligibility Bid Bond, Pre-Bid Conference Bid Evaluation, Post Qualification and Awards of Contracts.

The SEC reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any required formalities thereon and to award the contract to the bidder whose proposal is evaluated as most advantageous to the Commission.

SEC also assumes no obligation whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the bidder for any expense or loss that may be incurred in the preparation of the bids, nor does it guarantee that any award will be made.

(Sgd.) JOSE AQUINO
Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI—March 29 & April 5, 2006)

RP bank's FCDU assets up 9.4%

'05 growth seen
to be highest
since Asia crisis

By Doris C. Dumlao

PHILIPPINE BANKS' FOREIGN CURRENCY deposit units posted a 9.4-percent increase in assets last year to \$20.7 billion over a year ago.

It was the highest FCDU figure yet since the Asian currency turmoil erupted in 1997, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reported.

Deposit liabilities continued to be the main source of funding, accounting for a hefty 79.4 percent of the total FCDU resources.

These were valued at \$16.46 billion, or 5.9 percent higher than the \$15.54 billion posted the previous year.

The FCDU system's asset preference shifted in favor of marketable securities, with the net proportion held in this type of instrument almost doubling to 32.9 percent from 18 percent the year before.

Investments over loans

In contrast, the net share of investments held to maturity declined to 14.6 percent from 34.3 percent last year, partly due to tighter accounting guidelines issued by the BSP for investments in debt and equity securities.

Still wary of the impact of the 1997 Asian currency turmoil, the banks' FCDU system preferred investments over loans, as indicated by the decline in the share of net loan portfolio to total assets to 12.7 percent from 16.9 percent the year before.

Prior to the 1997 crisis, a lot of banks aggressively lent in foreign currencies, particularly to real estate companies, encouraged by the stable exchange rate and the lack of reserve requirement on FCDU deposits.

Cautious

When the currency turmoil erupted, many companies that were saddled with heavy dollar debts had to seek restructuring or even court-assisted rehabilitation.

The banks' FCD units have since grown cautious over lending.

Major beneficiary industries of the system's lending activity were: the manufacturing sector, with a 37.8-percent (or \$1.08 billion) share of the system's total loans; the electricity, gas and water sector, with a 21.4-percent (or \$613.5 million) share; and the transportation, storage and communication sector, with a 12.4-percent (or \$356.7 million) share.

The FCDU system's exposure to these three industries made up 71.6 percent of the total FCDU loans as of end-December 2005.

Ratio drop

Meanwhile, the BSP reported that FCDUs posted enhanced loan and asset quality for the period.

Both non-performing loans (NPLs) and non-performing assets (NPAs) ratios dropped to 1.8 percent (from 6.3 percent last year) and to 0.7 percent (from 2.4 percent), respectively.

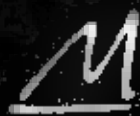
The FCDU system reported \$734 million in consolidated net income after tax at end-2005, 25 percent higher than the \$587.4 million net earnings in 2004.

"The improvement was attributed to the simultaneous increase in net interest income and non-interest income," the BSP said. "This dampened the effect of the 2.4 percent hike in operating expenses to \$148.3 million."

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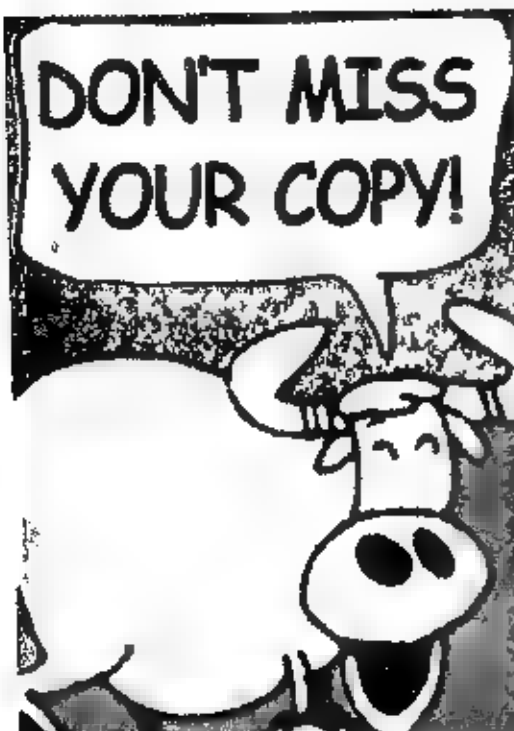
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By Tessa R. Salazar

The achievement of Gregorio Sabinidis Benz is such that it has been given its own place at the Mercedes-Benz museum in

"We call it the



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schels got their 280S

Romantic backdrop

the perfect car to dress up in
bridal ornamentation.



The Koschels got their 280SE

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Hyundai E. Rodriguez named dealer of the year

By Charles E. Buban

HYUNDAI E. RODRIGUEZ (Wheels Inc.) added the prestigious Hyundai Asia Resources Inc. (Hari) 2005 Dealer of the Year trophy to its growing list of achievements.

The latest award capped the two earlier recognition it also received from the exclusive distributor of Hyundai vehicles in the Philippines: the 2005 Best in

Sales and 2005 Best in After Sales trophies.

Prestigious award

In receiving the award, an elated Ramon Goh, president of Hyundai E. Rodriguez, said: "We are delighted to win. It is a prestigious award and this is a tremendous achievement for all parties involved. Having worked hard in maintaining our leadership in unit sales for the past four years as well as ensuring a consistent customer satisfaction ratings show an enormous level of commitment from the company's

sales, service and parts as well as the rest of our departments."

Hari said the Quezon City dealership played a big part in Hyundai's impressive 103 percent sales growth in 2005 in the Philippines, which translated to 4,924 vehicles sold.

Key to their success

Goh cited their multistory dealership on E. Rodriguez Sr. Avenue as key to their success considering it can service 50 vehicles at any given time and its well stocked parts and accessories department can immediately meet

any requests from customers

He also attributed his company's success to their group's years of experience considering that their dealership was already distributing Hyundai vehicles long before Hari was established as Hyundai's official representative here.

Goh said he is delighted with the recognition provided by the award but added modestly: "It's all in a day's work here at the dealership, however I would like to congratulate our entire team for their sterling efforts in making this possible."



HYUNDAI dealership on E. Rodriguez Sr. Avenue

Republic of the Philippines
UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES SYSTEM
Diliman, Quezon City

INVITATION TO BID

Sealed proposals will be received by the System Bids and Awards Committee, University of the Philippines System, Quezon Hall, Diliman, Quezon City, not later than 3:00 p.m. on April 11, 2006 at the System Supply and Property Management Office (SPMO-SYS) for the selection of Internet Service Provider.

Total approved budget ceiling: P4,000,000.00

The pre-bid conference will be held on March 29, 2006 at 3:00 p.m., SPMO-SYS, UP Diliman, Quezon City. Bid documents at P4,500.00 per set are available starting March 24, 2006 at the SPMO-SYS. Contact person: Eduardo G. Sabat, Telefax No. 926-4919, email address: egsabat@up.edu.ph

The University of the Philippines System reserves the right to reject any or all bids, as well as to waive any defect or informality required in such bids, and to accept such bids as may be considered most advantageous to the University

(Sgd.) CYNTHIA GRACE C. GREGORIO
Chair, System Bids and Awards Committee

(PDE - March 23 & 29, 2006)

PHILIPPINE PORTS AUTHORITY

PORT DISTRICT OFFICE OF VISAYAS

CIP COMPLEX, SERGIO OSMEÑA BLVD.
NORTH RECLAMATION AREA, CEBU CITY, PHILIPPINES
TEL. NO. (032) 2323401 to 04, FAX NO. (032) 2321980
Email: pdivisayas@ppa.gov.ph Website: www.ppa.gov.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The PHILIPPINE PORTS AUTHORITY, Port District Office - Visayas, through its Bids and Awards Committee - Engineering Project (BAC-EP), invites contractors registered with and classified by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder contract:

Name of Contract: Proposed Port Development Project
Location: Brgy. Tiaga, Limasawa Island, Southern Leyte
Major Items of Work:
1.) Construction of RC Pier (8.0 x 24.0 m)
2.) Construction of R/R Ramp (9.0 x 9.0 m)
3.) Reclamation Area (5.0 x 18.0 m)

Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC): P13,384,332.63
Source of Funds: PPA Corporate Fund
Contract Duration: Two Hundred Twenty (220) Calendar Days
CAB Registration: Medium A "Port, Harbor & Offshore Engineering"

Required Equipments		
1.) 1 unit	Boom Truck (5.0 T)	Owned
2.) 4 units	Bar Cutter	Owned
3.) 4 units	One Bagger Concrete Mixer	Owned
4.) 4 units	Concrete vibrator	Owned
5.) 2 units	Bar Bender	Owned
6.) 2 units	Welding Machine (150 Amp)	Owned
7.) 1 unit	Backhoe (0.70 cu.m.)	Owned/Leased
8.) 1 unit	Rock Grapple (2.0 cu.m.)	Owned/Leased
9.) 1 unit	Truck-mounted Crane (3.50 T)	Owned/Leased
10.) 1 unit	Plate Compactor	Owned/Leased
11.) 1 unit	Road Roller/Compactor 10.0 T	Owned/Leased
12.) 1 unit	Road Grader (125 hp)	Owned/Leased
13.) 1 unit	Crane Barge (DWT 450T)	Owned/Leased
14.) 1 unit	Drop Hammer (2T)	Owned/Leased
15.) 1 unit	Diesel Hammer (33.0 T)	Owned/Leased

Prospective bidders should possess a valid PCAB license and registration particulars applicable to the type and cost of the contract to be bid, have key personnel and equipment available for the prosecution of the contract, must have completed 50% for Major Items of Work (indicated above) on contracts/projects with similar in nature and complexity to the contract to be bid within the past five (5) years immediately preceding the publication of this invitation, with a value of at least 50% of the ABC, and meet the other eligibility requirements stated in the Eligibility Statement. Applications for eligibility as well as the preliminary examination of bids, will be evaluated on a "pass/fail" criteria. The BAC will conduct post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid. In accordance with the IRR-A of RA 9184, a contract will be awarded only to the lowest calculated and responsive bidder.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of RA 9184 and its implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The schedule of BAC activities is as follows:

BAC Activities	Schedule
1. Receipt from prospective bidders of Letters of Intent (LOI) including Application for Eligibility	April 05-11, 2006
2. Issuance of Eligibility Forms	April 05-17, 2006
3. Receipt of Eligibility Requirements	April 24, 2006

The BAC will issue to prospective bidders Eligibility Forms at Philippine Ports Authority, Port District Office - Visayas, CIP Complex, Sergio Osmeña Blvd., North Reclamation Area, Cebu City upon their submission of a LOI, photocopy of PCAB License and upon their payment of a non-refundable amount of P1,100.00 (inclusive of VAT) to the Philippine Ports Authority, Port District Office - Visayas Cashier. Prospective bidders shall submit the Eligibility Requirements to the BAC at the said address. They may also obtain the results of the Eligibility Check by the BAC at the same address.

The BAC will issue Bidding Documents only to bidders declared by the BAC to be eligible for the bidding upon payment of a non-refundable amount of P2,500.00 (inclusive of VAT) to the Philippine Ports Authority, Port District Office - Visayas Cashier.

The Philippine Ports Authority, Port District Office - Visayas reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all bids at any time prior to the award of contract without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

Approved by

(Sgd.) JAMES J. GANTALAD
BAC Chairman

(PDE - March 23 & 29, 2006)

Isuzu's 'terrific triad'

FULL TANK

Al Mendoza

move—even a minor one—and things could have blown out into smithereens. Not one ever happened—thank God

The trip was for the 27th Bangkok International Motor Show. Timmy Naval introduced the journalists to IOT (Isuzu Operations of Thailand) officials led by IOT top honcho Ryo Sakata and Ms Panatda "Brilliant Mind" Chennavasin "the best of the best" from the Philippine motoring media. Ray Butch "Elvis" Gamboa, flexing his French, described the group "crème la crème." Well done, housemate.

But Art, Timmy and IJ (Isuzu Joe, who else?) could not have done it without the superb backstopping job of Mario Ojales, Ellen Dizon and

Joy Andrada. Take a bow, please? It's not easy herding journalists sprinkled with delegates endowed with, uh-oh, near-autistic tendencies and, although it was their first time to stage the act, Art, Timmy and IJ, passed their baptism of fire with A-OK, 5-star marks. Cheers!

Isuzu, as usual, essayed a major role in the Bangkok International Motor Show, running up to April 2 and which has attracted an impressive array of international cast once more that included Bentley and Lexus.

Accentuated in the motor show long regarded as South East Asia's numero uno was Isuzu's unprecedented market leadership in the commercial vehicle segment for 23 successive years. This record-shattering achievement was now anchored on Isuzu's amazing D-Max pickup.

In just a time span of a little over three years in the Thai market, the Isuzu D-Max pickup has sold a total of more than 500,000 units. No other brand has scored that amazing feat in Thailand.

prompting Ms Panatda, director of Tri Petch Isuzu Sales Co. Ltd and senior vice president of IOT Co. Ltd., to say that Thailand today is the undisputed "Pickup Capital of the World."

Said Sakata-san, Tri Petch Isuzu president, of this Isuzu phenomenon: "Because the voice of the market is the voice of the people, we always listen to the people. It's been 50 years or so that Isuzu has been listening to the voice of the market—the people. That's one of our major secrets of success."

If Isuzu, whose D-Max is the No. 1 pickup in the Philippines the last two years, proceeds to also emerge No. 1 in the country in the next 23 years, I'll no longer be surprised one bit.

As Mao Zedong said, "Without the people, any revolution can't win."

QUOTE ME. The P3,000 we pay when availing of our comprehensive insurance is nothing but a highway robbery.

Comments to menju@pddt.sknet.

The Nissan Murano makes its way into RP market

THIS NISSAN SUV CAUGHT THE imagination of vehicle buyers in North America, Europe and Asia. And today, the Nissan Murano makes its way into the Philippine market.

The Murano is a dream vehicle to many. But it appeals very strongly toward the independent minded, who are actively engaged in trying new things, with a strong sense of self, and have great pride in their ongoing achievements.

"Finally, the Nissan Murano has arrived in the Philippines, and we are not only speaking here about an ordinary SUV, for the Murano is an SUV that is very unique in many ways, particularly its styling and its urban character," explained Dennis Chang, AVP for Sales and Marketing at Nissan Motor Phils. Inc. (NMPI).

Inspired by Murano glass

The Nissan Murano was inspired by Murano glass, which up to this day remains one of the most elegantly sculpted



THE MURANO appeals very strongly toward the independent minded.

glasses crafted in the island of Murano near Venice, in Italy.

Nissan's new SUV has nicely flowing lines over geometric curves, resulting in a beautifully sculpted exterior. It is also highly functional since it provides adequate room for five people, and boasts of excellent aerodynamics.

The Murano's sloping hood does not obstruct forward vision and makes it easier for the driver to see what

is closely ahead.

It has well designed leather seats, well-insulated interior paneling, genuine aluminum accents, adequate head, shoulder and leg room.

And with its front and side curtain airbags, the Murano provides a very high degree of safety for its passengers.

Engine power

Underneath its hood is the VQ engine, which is the only engine series to be listed in Ward's 10 Best Engine's List for 12 straight years.

The Murano's 3.5-liter VQ engine, equipped with Continuously Variable Valve Timing Control (CVT) and Nissan Induction Control System (NICS), produces 234 PS at 6000 rpm and 32.4 kg-m of torque at 3600 rpm.

The Murano's driving pleasure is enhanced with a switch-operated electric sunroof and the Bose audio system with 7 speakers and 6-disc CD changer.

The air-conditioning system controls are easy to modulate with its large dials. The rear passengers are also provided with air vents.



MURANO

Conference to focus on expressways' safety

TOP TOLLWAY OPERATORS AND transportation experts will discuss the safety of the country's expressway during the 4th Road Safety Conference of the Automobile Association Philippines (AAP) at the Dusit Hotel tomorrow.

AAP Vice President Johnny Angeles said numerous accidents usually happen on the express-

ways during summer mainly because the vehicle volume more than doubles.

He said major steps should be taken to prevent or at least minimize these accidents.

Attendees

Expected to attend the conference are officials of the Philippine

National Construction Corp. (PNCC), the operator of the South Luzon Expressway; Citra, the operator of the Metro Manila Skyway and the Batangas Star Tollway; the Manila North Tollways Corp. (MNTC), operator of the North Luzon Expressway; and the Public Estates Authority (PEA), operator of the Coastal Road.

Professors from the University of the Philippines' Center for Transportation Studies will again serve as moderators for the event.

The Road Safety Conference series is an advocacy of the AAP, the oldest and most respected auto club in the country, and industry leader Toyota Motor Philippines Corp.

The most coveted trophy

TOMORROW NIGHT AT THE Rockwell Tent in Makati, the most coveted trophy for a car will be awarded to the Car of the Year-Philippines (Coty-P) 2005 winner. Before this, over a span of six weekends this January and February at a closed-off area in the Forest Hills Golf and Country Club, Antipolo, 54 production models that were on sale in the Philippines from Sept. 1, 2004 to Dec. 31, 2005 underwent rigid quantitative and qualitative tests.

The tests were conducted by members of the Car Awards Group Inc. (Cagi), an independent, non-profit, nonstock association of 40 motoring journalists from more than two dozen print, television, radio and online media outlets. Their purpose: to recognize the achievement and encourage the pursuit of higher engineering, design, performance and safety standards by car manufacturers.

Winners

The best-in-class winners in 11 major categories are the finalists vying for the top overall trophy. The 11 categories, in which the price factor is taken into account, are mini/subcompacts, compact cars, executive sedans, luxury sedans, ultra-luxury sedans, entry-level sport utility vehicles, luxury SUVs, ultra-luxury SUVs, entry-level MPVs (multipurpose vehicles including AUVs and minivans), luxury MPVs and pickup trucks.

The test results were tallied and audited by Syop Gorres Velasco & Co. (SGV), the country's top accounting firm, and will not

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza



be released until tomorrow night.

Tomorrow's Coty-P Awards Night marks the second time that this annual awarding ceremony will be held by Cagi. In mid-2004, less than a dozen motoring journalists, inspired by the Car of the Year contests in the United States, Europe, Japan and other countries, organized Cagi to launch the same concept here.

Introducing Coty in the Philippines was tough, given the group's lack of resources, the need to learn from hard experience along the way how to successfully put together the whole thing. Plus the firm resolve of Cagi, from day one, not to solicit or accept funding or sponsorships from car manufacturers, distributors or dealers in order to establish and protect Coty-P's integrity and independence.

Growing

Despite the cynicism of a few industry players and motorheads, the Coty-P idea soon caught on, what with funding for the testing sessions generously provided by Automobile Association Philippines (AAP), the country's oldest and only national auto club. As a result, the membership roster of Cagi continues to grow and Coty-P is gaining a wider base of support and enthusiasm, bolstering

the hopes of Cagi's founders that Coty-P shall eventually win nationwide recognition and prominence over the years.

Tomorrow's Coty-P Awards Night is made possible by the continued support in cash and kind of sponsors who signed on last year and new sponsors this year: Worldbox Services International (organizer of the Manila Auto Show, where the 2005 Coty-P winner will be displayed), Rockwell Land Corp., Standard Insurance Co., Manila North Tollways Corp., AAR, SGV, Bridgestone

Tires (Philippine Allied Corp., sole distributor), Petron, Forest Hills Golf & Country Club, Federal Express Corp., BPI Family Savings Bank, Fusion R Motorsports, and media partners Philippine Daily Inquirer, Hot Wire, Auto Extreme and motioncars.com.

Cooperating

Of course, without the cooperation extended by car manufacturers/distributors in terms of lending Cagi their products (with full tanks, at that) for the Coty-P test sessions, neither would tomorrow's Awards Night have been possible. Alphabetically listed, the cooperating industry players are Audi (PGA Cars Inc.), BMW Phils., Chevrolet (GM Automobiles Phils.), Chrysler and Dodge (CATS Motors Inc.), Ford Group Phils. Inc., Honda Cars Phils. Inc., Hyundai Asia Resources Inc., Isuzu Phils. Corp., Kia (Columbian Motors Corp.), Mazda, Mercedes-Benz (CATS) Mitsubishi Motors Phils., Nissan Motor Phils. Inc., Toyota Motor Phils. Corp. and Volvo (Viking Cars Inc.).

In short, for car manufacturers as well as car lovers and the motoring media at seven o'clock tomorrow night, all roads lead to the 2nd Car of the Year Awards at the Rockwell Tent in Makati City.

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: Filling up can be hazardous to your wealth. (warning sign at gas station)

E-mail comments to asevilla@inquirer.com.ph



THE MERCEDES-BENZ S-Class of the Koschel family

This Benz 'jumped' over the moon

From page B2-1

Eternal commitment

According to a Mercedes-Benz car group document, Chag's Adenauer demonstrates that Mercedes-Benz symbolizes an eternal commitment, a special relationship.

The classic car museum in Stuttgart is also a shelter for MB cars owned by kings "We have in our collection cars previously owned by the king of Jordan, Thailand, Spain and more. These are very rare cars. If they want to have them restored, they send them to this museum," Roehrig says.

CATS Motors Inc., exclusive Mercedes-Benz distributor in the Philippines, has service records of the classic cars that they regularly service in their centers. It may

soon be on the lookout for long-running cars. Its service centers are monitoring cars of MB owners who might be racking up the miles.

When asked about the monetary value of these long-running cars, Roehrig says it would not be as high as, for example, rare cars (the kind of which limited numbers are ever produced), or cars with "special technical features" such as the SL, or rides of famous personalities such as Ringo Starr's Mercedes 190 SL Cabriolet and John Lennon's 1970 Mercedes-Benz 600 Pullman.

Starr's SL, incidentally, had logged in only 23,300 miles (37,280 km) before being turned over to the Stuttgart Museum.

That's just a weekend trip to the opera house for Sachinidi's 240D.

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YARIS: version 2.0 of the local Echo hatch, 1.5-liter engine a godsend



AVANZA: this compact wagon is aimed straight at the heart of the AUV segment

Bangkok: 3 shows and a thousand pickups

IT IS EASY TO THINK THAT ONE has to travel quite far to experience things that are truly dissimilar from one's own day-to-day existence. It is but logical that a trip, say to Europe, will yield a very distinct and different set of memories and images from that of our usual nine to five existences.

The short hop to Thailand for the 27th Bangkok International Motor Show held a lot of possibilities but would probably not hold anything new and exciting for this jaded motoring tourist. Luckily, this assessment was wrong.

3 shows

For the record, I saw three shows during the duration of my stay. The first was purely cultural, involved the proverbial "cast of thousands" and focused on the history of Siam. The second show was a little bit more interesting. Let's just say it was acrobatic and concerned with human anatomy and balloon bursting—using what might probably be the happiest blowgun in the world.

Final and foremost, of course, was the motor show held at the Bangkok International Trade and Exhibition Center (Bitec) exposition facility in the Bangna district. With the expo theme emphasizing friendliness to the ecology and happiness, one can imagine this writer salivating at the

MY DRIFT

Andre Palma



notion of seeing hybrids and alternative fuel vehicles.

My personal target was the current model Toyota Prius with my ultimate goal of driving said hybrid. Unfortunately, the only Prius at the show was a cut-away model at the massive Toyota display area. Sharing center stage with the i-swing personal mobility solution and the Fine-T Fuel Cell Hybrid concept, the second generation Prius serves as the first step into a fossil fuel-free motoring future. I guess I'll have to wait a little more before I finally get to drive and review one.

Toyota display

Personal highlights from the Toyota display at Bitec were three locally unavailable two-box (wagon, MPV or hatchback, no truck) designs. The Indonesian-built Avanza compact wagon might very well serve the transport needs of many Filipino families, businesses and FX operators. Retailing for only 539,000 Baht, value for money is a clear strength of this AUV sized product.

On the other side of the pricing spectrum is the sporty Wish MPV. Complete with a 2.0-liter VVT-i engine, muscular wheel arches and large diameter wheels, this Thailand-assembled model starts at 1,102,000.

Baht and can be had with HID lamps and even larger tire and wheel packages as options. Also on hand was the reincarnated Yaris/Vitz/Echo sport hatch. The MK2 Yaris is sold in Thailand with the same 1NZ-FE 1.5-liter VVT-i engine that is found in the Philippine-released Vios subcompact sedan. Imagine the 109-bhp of the Vios in a smaller, lighter and shorter platform,

something worth keeping our collective fingers crossed for.

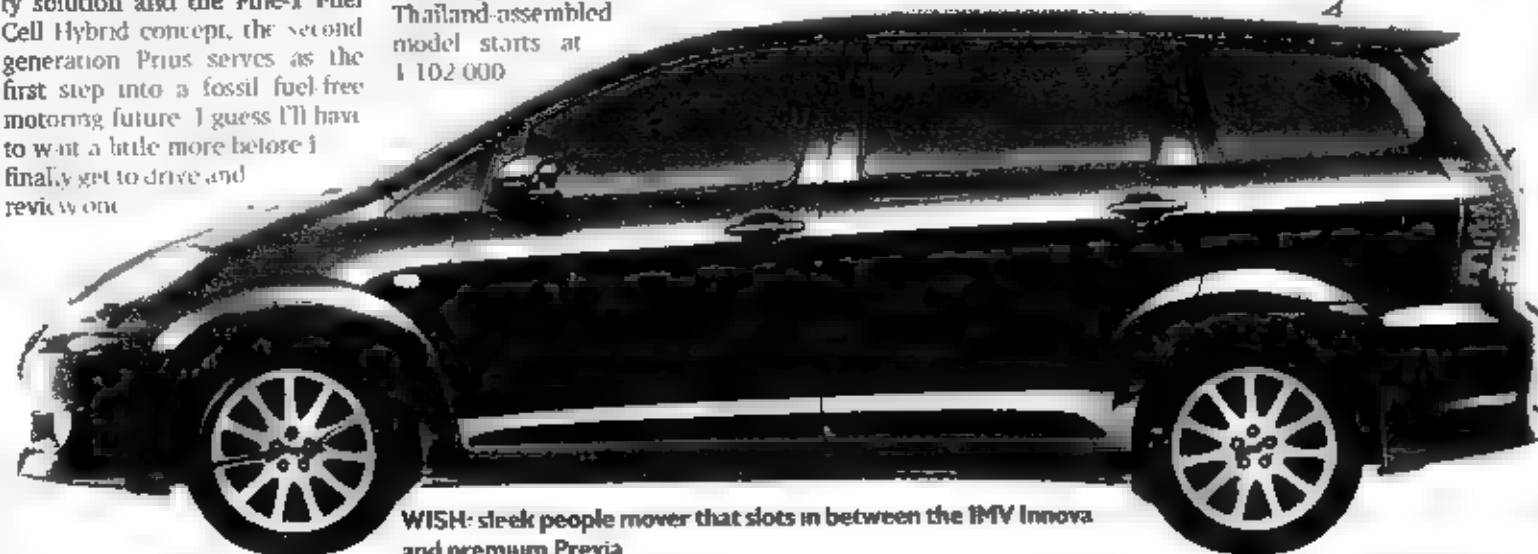
Samrong production facility

Already quite contented with the models I had seen at the Toyota exhibit, I was quite honestly about to call it a day, owing to the oppressive heat and humidity that characterize Bangkok in late March but I was not about to miss

a peak into the heart of Toyota Motor Thailand's Samrong production facility. Just how big is this vehicle production facility? The actual physical size of the real estate escapes me but the sheer volume of vehicle output does not.

The Samrong plant produces 1,000 IMV units (Hilux pickups) a day in two shifts. That's almost 360,000 vehicles a year or 10 times the production of the Sta. Rosa facility of Toyota Motors Philippines. Wow! Two-door, extended cab, full cab, 4x2, 4x4—you name it, they make it at Samrong. So diverse are the variations of the Hilux units at the plant that I even spied a 4.0-liter V6 engine variant bound for markets further abroad.

In the end, the trip to this year's Bangkok show with the visit to the massive facility at Samrong was eye-opening, to say the least. It makes one ask the question, "Why is this not the market situation in the Philippines?" Both nations suffered through the regional financial crisis of the late '90s, but it seems as if our neighbor to the West has truly left us by leaps and bounds. "Siam Niramit," as our Thai guide would say, amazing Thailand indeed.



WISH: sleek people mover that slots in between the IMV Innova and premium Previa

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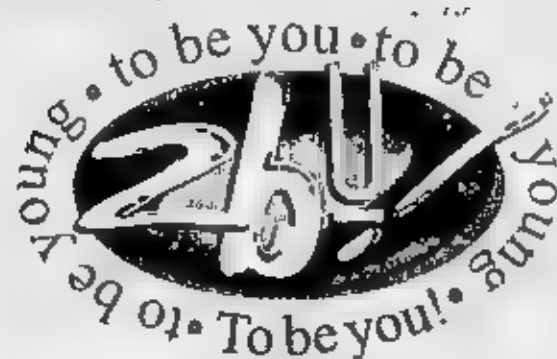
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Class of 2006 Part 2

You've marched, you've partied—now what? We know the days after graduation can be scary. But 2bU! will help you make those all-important post-graduation decisions. Graduate school? Law school? Med school? If you're considering a return to campus, we've got you covered. We also have a complete guide for jump-starting your career—from writing your resumé and wardrobe tips to the most common interview questions and the websites that will help you land the job you want. And because you'll need all the ammo you can get when you step out into the real world, we have tips and stories from INQUIRER's Lifestyle Reporters—people who have

graduated before you and have survived life after the big march. Make us proud, graduates. For non-graduates, we have stories on hot summer looks and on detoxifying after

partying. And for your inner geeks, we have an article on the 22nd Mac World Conference and Expo, a review of the Sony DVD805 and the chance to win a Sony Walkman Bean.

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Mastering school

A rundown of the most popular and unusual graduate courses here and abroad

By Gmeleen Faye B. Tomboc
2bU! Correspondent

GOING BACK TO SCHOOL WOULD PROBABLY be the last thing on any fresh graduate's mind. Why spend the best years of your youth slaving away at some dusty library when you can already be in the "real world," walking down Ayala Avenue on your way to a power breakfast?

Graduate degrees offer many advantages, though. They may give you an advantage when applying for a job, broaden the knowledge and skills gained in your undergraduate degree, and boost your chances of promotion when you start working.

2bU! gives you the 411 on the most popular graduate courses here and abroad.

Masteral studies

In some industries, like in the academe, getting a Masters degree is a definite advantage. Josephine Garcia, 24, says her MS (Master of Science) Physics degree will be crucial when she starts work as a scientist and researcher. A future professor like Shelanee, 23, can also learn more effective teaching methods from her MA (Master of Arts) in Education.

A graduate degree is also useful if you want to have more specialized knowledge. Future UN diplomats may want to try Ateneo's MA in Political Science, Major in Global Politics. Techies may fancy an MS in Information Technology from De La Salle (DLSU).

If you simply want to venture into a new field, try these out-of-this-world degrees from the University of the Philippines (UP): MA in Archaeological Studies, Master of Tropical Landscape Architecture, and even a Master in Physical Education. You can also go into Bioethics, Higher Religious Studies, Cultural Heritage Studies or even Canon Law at the University of Sto. Tomas (UST).

MASTERING/C2

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From philosophy to journalism

By Cheche V. Moral

SHORTLY BEFORE I GRADUATED FROM college many years ago, a professor said in one of my classes that we, being graduates of the premier state university, could demand no less than that X-amount from our first employer. I left school soon after, no less naive than four years earlier, believing just that.

It was the first of a series of rude awakenings for me when, landing my first job, I was told my paycheck would only be a third of that amount quoted by my college professor—before taxes.

I don't presume to know more than any of you, Class of 2006. But I was once like many of you—full of ideals, full of dreams, so full of myself. You see, while that big great party called school is said to prepare you for the world out there, in some ways it can also teach you grand ideas about yourself—and more often than not, sage truths. At least I did.

I left school believing I was smart and well-equipped to make the world bend

over backward for me. I got a job on my first try even as, I smugly thought, I had no specific training (so, shoot me, Nietzsche, for majoring in philosophy!), no *laure* of any sort inscribed in my college diploma, no special skills to speak of. I, the worst student in the history of education, with a job, at age 20, in the *Inquirer*? Damn, was I full of myself!

I felt mighty pleased with myself that I didn't demand higher pay (not that they'd have given me more, of course, I know that now). Never mind that it meant my parents would continue subsidizing my living expenses for till heaven knew when. (I didn't realize then how irresponsible and self-centered that thought was.) Besides, I said, it was a temporary job. It was merely a way out of my over-extended post-grad holiday. I would be out of here in a few months—again live off my folks, go back to school and get a law degree. Then I'll make real moolah.

Out here, I soon found out, it's a level playing field. It's true, in a way, that you have an (unfair?) advantage if you're a

product of a top university. But in truth, it doesn't mean you're any better than the next guy. If you don't work your butt off to prove your worth, then you can be just as dispensable as everyone else.

Surprises

It can also be very daunting when the life as you planned it goes off-course. So be ready for surprises.

I never imagined I would like my "temporary job," even more the prospect of a career doing—I didn't realize sooner—what I loved best. I was grossly unprepared. I had to learn everything on the job, and I'm not ashamed to say I'm still learning.

The so-called real world is quite humbling. To this day, proving I can just be as competent as anyone who trained four long years to be journalist is a constant struggle. Am I anywhere near succeeding? I don't know.

I always joke that I never dreamed I'd be making a living writing about hemlines—after years of struggling to make sense of the writings of Descartes,

Kierkegaard, Wittgenstein. But the job of a lifestyle reporter isn't as easy and glamorous as some impressionable wannabe writers might think. It's real work. You're remiss, and your boss will have your head for lunch.

You cover fashion shows, but it doesn't mean you're expected to dress couture. You don't get free couture (which isn't saying you don't get offered, but what would taking it say about you?) and heaven knows your reporter's paycheck can't afford it. Do you beat yourself over it? No.

You're not the people you cover. Anyone who hopes to be a lifestyle reporter should remember that. Those who forget are the ones who make it so hard to get the respect this job deserves. Whatever industry you end up in, you don't want to be one of those people. That, I think, you needn't a journalism school (or any school, for that matter) to teach you.

Okay, so it wasn't until several years into the job that I finally got a paycheck that's worth as much as what my UP professor said. This time, I learned it.

Often I still struggle to fight the urge to buy that new pair of shoes, but I stop myself because, I remember, I have to pay rent. A get-together with old friends takes weeks of planning, but at the last minute I take a rain check because, again, I have a deadline.

Rules change once you're employed. Playing hooky at anytime is no longer an option. It's quite unlike school when you can leave your chances of passing to chance, and with a few tears can get your parents to forgive you for that red mark—and by day's end still get your allowance. You're being paid to do a job, and you have to earn it. It's called responsibility.

Don't be a big baby and expect Mom to be there to bail you out each time you blow your entire paycheck on that designer handbag, because she won't be—and for your own sake, she shouldn't be.

The party's over, graduates. Welcome to life.

E-mail the author at cmoral@inquirer.com.ph

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The perfect job does not exist

By Vangie Baga-Reyes

TO THE GRADUATES OF 2006, MY message is short and sweet.

The world out there is a dense jungle of predators and pitfalls. It lurks like a vicious beast waiting to corrupt whatever stupid idealism the university has instilled in you.

After graduation, your day starts with finding a job, which, by the way, is very demeaning every step of the way. People who interview applicants often act as if they own the company. Believe me. They make you wait long lines and ask for photocopies of your papers but never allow you to use theirs. They never realize that you took long, sweaty jeepney or bus rides on your Sunday dress and high heels just to get to their cramped, stuffy-smelling offices. If the office is big, clean and swanky, chances are people there are all the more rude and condescending.

Once you land a job, don't expect to be spoon-fed by your officemates, let alone your boss. Anticipate that the persons in the next cubicles are wicked witches because they most likely are. The only people who would show sympathy are those who have been there for decades and got bypassed by promotions because they are too nice to be bosses.

By all probability, the boss is a tyrant with no regard for the feelings of people beneath him or her. That is especially true for highly competitive companies and considered leaders in the industry.

Unless you have rich parents, you should not expect to land the job of your dreams

In work, as in life, success and arrogance seem to go hand and in hand. Affectionate superiors like that of Ernie Brockovich can only be found in companies that are not doing good. They are affectionate to make up for the lousy pay and benefit package they offer.

The rule of the thumb is do not stay in your job if the pay sucks and you hate doing your work. If you despise your job but gets well compensated, that's good enough reason not to quit. If you love your job but don't get paid enough, I'd understand if you hang on. Forget about having a big paycheck for a job you love doing. It doesn't exist in this world, I think.

I hope I have imparted valuable insights somehow, because I don't want you to feel bad after struggling hard to finish college. Oh, and by the way, this message does not apply to rich kids who either own the company or have parents who are well-connected.

Lastly, please don't take things too seriously if you want to enjoy retirement.

E-mail the author at vbaga@inquirer.com.ph

Mastering school

From page C1

The possibilities are endless, and we're not even talking about degrees you can get abroad yet. Singapore Management University offers a Masters in Wealth Management, where you can hone your skills investing other people's billions. If funding is a problem, scholarships abound on the Internet. For instance, www.britishcouncil.org gives the lowdown on studying in UK for free.

MBA

Those cut out for the business world may take a Master in Business Administration (MBA). This course is highly interactive and students are required to discuss and give reports on case studies everyday. Allot two years if you intend to be a full-time MBA student at schools like the Asian Institute of Management.

However, you can't start your MBA immediately after graduation. For instance, UP requires one-year work experience for full-time students.

If an MBA is too general for you, you can opt for an MS in Financial Engineering at DLSU, a Master in Business and Health from Ateneo, or an MS in Advertising from UST.

Law

Aspiring attorneys have no choice but to go back for four years of law school. A note of warning though: It's not as easy as the movie, "Legally Blonde," portrays it. Intense studying, good speaking skills and enough self-confidence to argue with terror teachers are required. Finally, law students have to pass the bar, which spans four consecutive Sundays. Check out the programs at UP Ateneo, San Beda and UST. If you're also planning to get an MBA degree, hit two birds with one stone by entering the JD-MBA program of FEU and DLSU. If you already have a law degree and want to specialize more, UST offers an MA and PhD in law, which are the oldest graduate programs in law in the country and which have graduated outstanding jurists.

Med school

If you've always wanted to be a doctor, head to UST, UP-Manila, University of the East, Far Eastern University or St. Luke's. Compared to law studies, med school is unusually expensive. You'll soon understand why a doctor charges P500 for a five-minute consultation. Med schools can charge as much as P70,000 per semester.

The road to becoming a doctor is also unusu-

ally long. Those lucky enough to hurdle the National Medical Admission Test will spend four years in med school, then one year as interns. After taking the board exams, they can now be general practitioners, or proceed to a 3-5 year residency. After taking yet another exam, only then can they be called specialists (like pediatricians or OB gynecs). Some go on to fellowships to gain even more specialized knowledge.

Tina Mateo, 24, who is now in her fourth year at UP acknowledges that med school can be "toxic" (med school jargon for extremely demanding). But as Ryan, 28, puts it, being a doctor can be a form of service to the country.

To work or not to work

Now that you've decided on what degree to take, will you be studying full-time or part-time?

Becoming a full-time student straight after graduation is recommended if you don't want to lose your enthusiasm for studying. Once you start earning your own money, you might find it hard to go back to being just a student. In fact, better if you start your masters right away so you don't forget those mind-boggling equations in chemistry or mathematics.

Some argue that it's better to work first before going back to school. For business courses, prior work experience is a must so you can have something meaningful to contribute to class discussions.

The supermen and superwomen among us may choose to work while studying. If your studies are related to your work, you can immediately apply the things you're learning. Be prepared to sacrifice your weekends and gimnick nights, though. To make things a little easier, ask your boss if you can work on a flex-time basis, like what Teejaye, a 24-year-old MBA student, did.

Combining work and studies may be easier if you get your masters degree online. You need not commute to school because you can attend classes and submit coursework online. The UP Open University (www.upou.org) offers distance-education courses, or you can surf the Net for thousands of degrees available abroad.

Getting another degree may seem dreadful to new graduates who are already raring to take on the "real world." But who knows, it might just be your chance to redeem yourself if you had a lackluster performance in college. Also, with the ranks of the unemployed swelling by the minute, an MA or MS may just be your edge over everyone else. Happy studying!

E-mail the author at gineleen@lycos.com

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SPALDING

'Intox-detox': What to do after the party

I AM NOT AS HIGH-MAINTENANCE AS I seem. Aside from my obsession with eye cream (to renew the harm caused by late nights), I do not have a specific step-by-step regimen for healthy-looking skin, pre- or post-party. In fact, when people ask me what my skincare routine is, I just say, "shower with soap."

That "shower with soap" era ended last year, after I reached the quarter-life celebration, which meant me saying farewell to just leaving it all to "youth." I recall having a late-night taping with John Pratts (pre-"Big Brother" era), who I had seen earlier that same evening in an event. Fast-forward to non-stop working hours till sunrise at 5:30 a.m. and without sleep, he looked as fresh as morning dew.

"How can he look like that 48 hours straight?" I asked my seat mate between takes. "One word," he said. "Youth."

Youth (this section's main responsibility), I have observed, is obsessed with itself. Too many times I overhear people just past legal age exclaim, "oh my we're getting old." Thus hand in hand with the Google generation's obsession with speed comes their addiction to time-delay tactics (I'm an expert at this topic). What can I say? We want everything, right now.

By "time-delay tactics," I didn't mean to imply the passé Filipino time. I meant skincare, spas and other modes of pampering and detoxification. These days, partyphiliacs do the whole "intox-detox" faster than a grandfather clock on steroids.

I never used to like massages. I grew up giving my mother daily back rubs that would put her to sleep. At a young age, I knew I was a good masseur. But Someone Up There had other plans for me and put me here. If ever I do indulge in the once-in-a-blue-moon massage, it was meant to serve as research for me so that I can become a better massage therapist.

Lately though, I look forward to those spa binges at Urban Spa and the two-hour detox massage at Neo Spa. I am even thinking of trying the Pharaoh's treatment at Boracay's famed Mandala, the perfect destination spot for that intox-detox, yin-yang-Yap! style.

Manual party

My "intox" came in the form of reading Manual's music issue and attending their launch at underground favorite MDC (Manila DJ Club at The Fort—for those who care to know). They called the night "Ear-gasm" because they feted the peeps who made music rock this side of town. Every major and up-and-coming musician had their attendance checked by Manual's RJ Ledesma and Michealle Jao, who are both jamming and banging their heads to make sure every issue is a sure winner.

Rock stars are experts at indulgence, and I sure had a multiple "ear-gasm" that night. One thing I noticed though—rock stars do not take care of their skin. Look at Pepe Smith. And many others. The rock-and-roll lifestyle forgot to add one more "R" word—refresh.

Except for Rico Blanco of Rivermaya, who shares my newfound affinity for Hollywood cult brand Zuh (pronounced "zhur"—men's skincare available at all Rustans' branches), almost everybody else looked tired and sweaty. Not that I am encouraging Karl Roy and Bamboo to cleanse, tone and moisturize, but it may serve them (and all of us) better when the time comes.

"My goal is to never have a face lift, or other surgery on my face, so I'm investing in skincare as early as now to combat premature aging," a skin-conscious male friend of mine, who is still scared to tell his dad that he goes to the derma, once confided. He doesn't need to be scared, though, because even Time magazine has acknowledged the fact that men have indeed become more vain, and are spending time, "priming and preening." "Because that's what women [and men] want."

On the Time Magazine cover was a man putting on mascara. Manual, your turn.

My new vain self

Detox for me was saying no to the free-flowing afternoon buzz of Freixenet sparkling wine and Rene Barbiers—as Lancôme launched its latest whitening product, Blanc Expert NeuroWhite, at M Café.

"Wow, this is the first time we're seeing each other in afternoon light," some guests exclaimed to each other as they traded besobesos. L'Oréal's Angelique Villaraza and Aussie photog Darren Tieste brought their puppies. Cute. Another guest brought her baby. Too cute.

It was fascinating to see women who I would normally see tanning at Tan or bathing in Bora all hover to find out the latest on skin whitening. This product was, after all, especially formulated for Asian skin. Oh well, they were all wearing white anyway, as they gazed at the enlightened images of Marta Araneta, Anna Palabayab, Jackie Antonio, Anna Cuyuneng and Mariko Jacinto—women whom I adore and admire for their youth, luminosity and va-va-voom vivacity.

Belated Happy Women's Month, all you! If there's one thing I learned from them, it's that

it really pays to invest in skincare.

These days, I am a renewed vain person. Nicole Hernandez hopped into our Addict Mobile summer campaign photo shoot looking so fresh, excited to share with me her belated birthday gift—a session of diamond peel. I, then, consulted Preview beauty editor Agoo Bengzon to get her go-signal, and I loved it! Tina Timio introduced me to Shu Uemura cleansing oils and toners, and Dr. Sheila Acosta of Belo Medical Clinic is my new text mate.

Indulging in these new rituals is something alien for me, but I realize that the best after-party is one where you replenish yourself—whether with Berocca, vitamin C, a workout at the gym or hugging your puppy, whatever floats your boat—to make sure that you have enough to last for the next party, in the next coming years, and for generations to come.



'Adolescence stretches out like a night sky. Full of brave new worlds, black holes and long expanses of dreamy space, it seems to go on forever, yet disappears in a new dawn heartbeat.'

—Skye Sherwin, ID Magazine

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VIII. Consumers may join as many times as they want.

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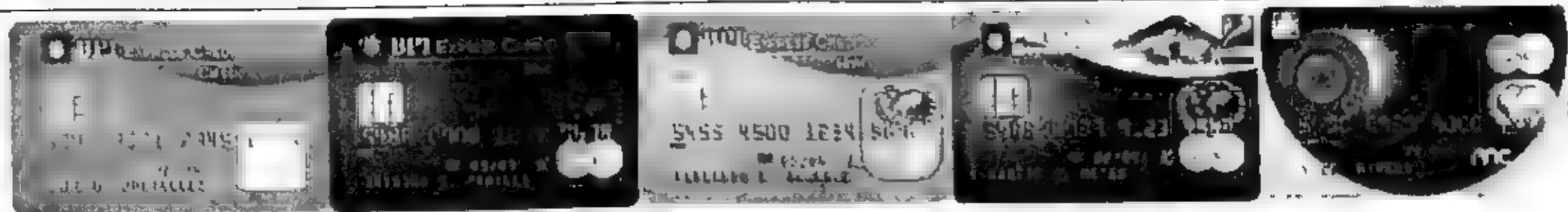
X. Entries thru mail are qualified 15 days after the promo period.

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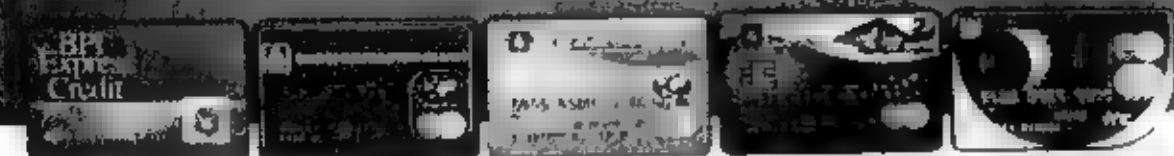
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Job-hunting 101

By Katrina Yap
2BU1 Correspondent

CONGRATULATIONS, FRESH GRAD! AFTER years of sleepless nights and countless projects, you're now ready to face the world. Armed with a college degree, you feel invincible. You want to get your professional life started, and you want it now.

But landing a job nowadays seems tougher than you originally thought. Some of your batchmates might have already found themselves employed, adding to the pressure on you.

But remember that your career is your own, so take your own time in finding what suits you best. Here are some tips on how you can start that career.

Evaluate yourself.

Before you even start writing a resumé, you'll have to conduct a self-assessment. Ask yourself what interests you, what excites you.

Try to define your passion, so you'll have an idea what possible careers would suit you. Do a rundown of your skills and abilities.

Be honest to yourself—this is the only way you'll have a grasp of what you can and want to do.

Research

Next, do your research. Look up industries and employers you may take an interest in.

Keep an open mind—dream big, but don't be too picky. Say you graduated with a degree in Mass Communication, but have difficulty finding job openings in mass media. You might want to consider exploring careers in advertising and public relations.

Most companies also now have Corporate Communication and Media departments, where a lot of opportunities await those with strong writing skills. Always look beyond.

Note: Health care, information technology and the call-center industries are known to be most active in recruiting today.

Finding jobs

So where can you find jobs?

You'll come across some when you do your research on different companies and industries. But that might not be enough. What's important is that you stop sitting around thinking a job will miraculously find you. There are thousands of new graduates just like you who are looking for employment, so you have to work at it.

Places to look:

- Classified ads section of newspapers
- Your school's placement office
- Job fairs
- Your local government unit
- The worldwide web (try online recruitment websites like www.jobmarketonline.com, www.jobsdb.com and www.jobstreet.com.ph)
- Your prospective companies' websites
- Direct application

Also, ask for referrals. Some companies offer incentives to their employees when they bring in qualified people. This, however, has disadvantages. Aside from putting pressure on the person who recommended you (it will be his/her head on the chopping board if you don't meet expectations), you'll always be held to a certain standard for having been recommended.

Writing the resumé

When it comes to drafting your resumé, keep in mind that a winning resumé is your

key to an interview. So go ahead, highlight your abilities, your education and work experience (if any).

But don't even think of lying. You'll get into a lot of trouble for giving misleading information. Your potential employers can do reference checks.

Write the objective specific to the position you're applying for. Do not write just one resumé for different positions and companies. Each resumé (and cover letter—we will get to that later), must be tailor-fit to a specific employer.

Some pointers

Do:

Proofread. Check for typos and grammatical errors. Go through every detail.

Keep it short and simple. Some employers would prefer that resumé be just a page long, as they scan through hundreds of other applications.

JOB-HUNTING/D4

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A resumé is a one- or two-page summary of your skills, experience and education. Resúmes must be concise. The person reading the resumé is likely to spend just a few minutes reviewing it.

A curriculum vitae or CV is more detailed and structured. It outlines your educational background, publications, awards and work history.

CVs tend to be on the lengthy side (they can run over 10 pages long), so it works best for those who could boast of extensive academic and professional credentials. It is used primarily when applying for international, education, scientific or research positions.

Resúmes work best for first-time job hunters.

'Provinciana' hits it big in the city, somehow

By Anne A. Jambora

WELCOME TO THE REAL world.

As you toss aside your toga today, still warm from use during the commencement exercises, your head reels feverishly with youthful ideals of the new life you're about to embark in. Well, toss them out as well. It's time to grow up.

While there's nothing wrong with dreaming, and I urge you all to dream big dreams, becoming a full-fledged adult is far from easy. Alas, life is not a box of chocolates.

There are sharks out there. You will fall flat on your face, you will get frustrated, you will feel the sting of rejection, and you will take the thorny course just to reclaim your life. Take heart, though. The lessons you will glean will reward you better than the riches of this world.

As you prepare to take your wings for its first awkward flight, explore the many possibilities and choices. Life is tempered by the tough choices you make. And there's the good news—you always, always have a choice. Be wary of those who say you don't. Their imaginations are thin.

You're young. Inexperience may be your worst enemy for now, but take advantage of the luxury of time afforded by your youth to pursue your passions

and, in case you still don't know it yet, to find your calling. Strangely enough, sometimes it is only when you lose your way that you find yourself.

After my graduation, for instance, I vowed never to become a journalist—a newspaper journalist, to be exact. And I did everything I could to avoid that route. I edited and produced TV documentaries, I wrote scripts and created storyboards, I wrote copy when I stumbled into advertising... What began as a transition job here at the *Inquirer* turned out to be the home I've long searched for.

Conundrum

It is an existential conundrum, this thing called life, so try not to waste too much time asking questions that nobody—dead or alive—will ever have an answer to. Just go ahead and get a life.

Don't be afraid to take risks, for the day you stop taking chances is the day you begin to die. Step out from your comfort zone. Cut the umbilical cord that has held you affectionately since infancy. While that link has cloistered you from the dog-eat-dog world outside, it is only when you scrape your knee and begin to bleed that you become human. Do yourself a favor and give your parents a break. Learn how it feels to be truly free and alive.

Independence, naturally, comes with a price. And the long queue of bills to

settle every month is just the tip of the iceberg.

When I decided to seek work in far-off Manila, less than a year after my father passed away, I bought a one-way ticket and that was it. Turning back with my tail between my legs was not an option. My mother offered a plane ticket to Manila. Too proud, or stupid, I refused to accept it. Instead I bought boat tickets to save a few bucks (my beloved parrot traveled with me). She offered to give me allowance to help me get by on my first few months, and again I said no.

"Don't worry, I'll be fine." Truth was I barely had over P1,000 in my pocket—and this wasn't a very long time ago—and that terrified me more than my horrible grasp of the Tagalog language. Having been freeloading in my mother's womb all those years and spoiled rotten of having everything done for me, I was too dumb to think of saving up. Ah, but it was too late for regrets.

Sure, it was tough braving my way through thick crowds in a strange city armed only with my faltering Tagalog. In fact, there were times when I asked friends to write down on a piece of paper a Tagalog sentence when I had to buy in a neighborhood *sari-sari* store, something as mundane as needle and thread.

But that was nothing compared to the doors slammed at my face simply be-

cause most Manilans hadn't a notion of my university. (It is, in fact, among the Top 5 universities, but since it's not in Metro Manila, it didn't bear any merit.) How snooty and presumptuous this city can be! How quickly it scoffs at the sight of some lost *provinciana* who deserves an equal chance to follow her dreams. But then again, this isn't a perfect world.

Inevitably, I ran low on chips. I starved off hunger by tucking myself in bed early even when I'd get a headache, unable to sleep. When I washed my clothes for the first time in my life with my bare hands, my spirit sank. My hopes melted with the suds and snaked their way to the gutter. And I broke a promise I made to myself: I wept. Unabashedly. I yearned for the comforts of my home.

A diamond stone is lifeless unless it is cut in precision many times. And then it sparkles, and then it shines. I do not have a million bucks or glittering medals to my name, nor do I now live in a posh address. But I am content to glow in my family's eyes.

Follow your heart, guard your principles, be true to yourself. Life is too short to live up to the expectations of others. Before you know it, your time is up, metered by your shallow sighs.

The world is waiting. Are you ready for it?

E-mail the author at ajambora@inquirer.com.ph

To the graduates, to make much of time

By Constantino C. Tejero

IT IS NOW AT THAT TIME OF THE YEAR WHEN the fiercest rat race occurs. Because it is around this time that hundreds of schools are unleashing thousands of graduates all over the country.

The moment you graduate from college, you naturally look for a job—or what's a diploma for? One has to satisfy the material needs before one even thinks of making a mark in society. It's basic instinct—or how else could one physically go on to achieve that higher aspiration? To build the temple, you have to feed the body.

But with a few hundreds of jobs dangling before thousands of job-seekers—millions even, if we include the unemployed—frustration is rampant, the jostling becomes rabid, a stampede is understandable. The term "rat race," in fact, is insufficient when you're talking of a dog-eat-dog situation.

New graduates actually have two options: Either prepare to get bruised and join the rat race at once, or take it easy and recharge energies, gather momentum, and plunge.

You think schoolwork was bruising? Well, there's bad news waiting for you here: Schoolwork is a balm compared to onsite job. In fact, the situation of the new graduate can favorably compare with that classic case of one being thrown from the frying pan to the fire.

And if you get that job, don't expect to be on top of the corporate ladder immediately, unless your uncle owns the majority share in the company. Everyone has to start somewhere.

And value that job as if it were the only one you'd get in your lifetime. Remember, at every step you make on that ladder, dozens of hands and feet are grasping at or stepping on your shoes—and eyes are watching for your misstep, waiting for your fall.

Actually, the satisfaction from a job well done, whether in school or at the workplace, is just about the same. But there's the bonus of having your own money to spend as you please, and the freedom from dependence on your relatives.

The wiser person would opt for the second option, if he or she can afford it. Graduates are like soldiers from battle who need to be treated of their wounds, bandaged, fed and rested before being sent back to the battlefield.

If Daddy can still afford it, you can always take up further studies in preparation for that job and get your MBA. Better still, read the books you cast aside in your student days, and cultivate a wider appreciation of the immaterial, a deeper understanding of life's mysteries and calm acceptance of its absurdities.

But while recharging your batteries, don't short-circuit. You might forget why you strove to get that diploma in the first place. While resting, don't waste time. You might enjoy the well-rested life so much you can get rusty and so forever rest. There's nothing more tragic than youth having a burnout.

If, like the Buddhist, your concept of time is circular instead of linear, and you're not cut out for a nine-to-five job, well, you can always go to the mountains, into caves and hinterlands, and join NGOs that work for the betterment of our cultural minorities. Or be an artist, or become a philosopher. Anything but life fallow.

We know life is hard, so don't make it any harder. If you can't be useful to society, help yourself, at least.

Lessons from a not-so-ideal graduate

By Pam Pastor

I AM THE LAST PERSON WHO SHOULD be talking about graduation. I didn't even attend my own.

I saw graduation as a hurdle to get over, an obstacle I had to overcome so I could finally start working full-time for this paper. When that fateful day came, I wore a toga all right, but only to my dinner party. And it was the wrong shade of blue—the shop at Recto had run out of my college's colors.

Despite my absence from the ceremonies, graduating from the university taught me a few things—some big, some small and some, well, forgettable.

You will miss school. Sure, you're still in the middle of rejoicing over the fact that you no longer have to face your nasty professor and you're probably thanking the high heavens because the days of surprise quizzes are over. But when you're neck-deep in paperwork and are collecting overtime hours as if you can sell them on eBay for a fortune, you will definitely start missing those days when your biggest problem was today's graded recitation. You know those annoying adults who tell you things like, "Oh I wish I could go back to school" or "I'd rather be a student forever"? Pretty soon, that will become you.

Take a break. You have your entire life to work. And once you start working, you'll be doing it forever. Or at least until

you're 65. You've just spent at least sixteen years of your life in school. Now is the time to take a break. Whether your idea of a timeout is a weekend in Boracay, a month at your grandparents' place in the province or a full week in your pajamas eating Cheetos and watching DVDs, do it. You deserve it.

Don't let your course dictate your life. Your parents won the first battle—you hate math but they made you study accountancy. You don't know how you ended taking up dentistry when you can't imagine staring into people's mouths for the rest of your life. Here's a little nugget of wisdom: Your course doesn't dictate who or what you will become. A friend who took up geodetic engineering is now making a good living in publishing. I know a biology graduate who is now running her own business, a nurse who became a priest, a lawyer who decided to open a restaurant. Your future is waiting—and you get to decide what it will be.

The school you graduated from does not determine the quality of your future. There are still small-minded companies that only accept applicants from the supposed top universities but don't let that stop you. Just because you came from one of the more popular schools doesn't mean you can rest easy. And it doesn't matter either if you came from a school that no one else has heard about. It is you,

and not your diploma, who will make your future.

Pursue your passion. Life is too short for you to be stuck doing things you really don't want to be doing. Sure, blessed and few are the people who get to do what they love for a living but you might just turn out to be one of them. You would never know if you don't try. Whether it's art, music, sports, writing, food—pursue your passion. Your happiness and success may just depend on it.

Don't let your college persona determine who you will become. (Unless you really loved who you were in college.) It doesn't matter if you were the nerd, the dumb jock, the bully or the wallflower. College is over and your new life is beginning. Now is the time for reinvention if you deem it necessary. Think Madonna—but maybe not her cone bra phase. If you were the wallflower, break out of your shell. If you were the bully, try to be nicer. The world is waiting—try to be the best person you can be.

Make good decisions. Remember, the decisions you make after college have real-life consequences. Making a mistake no longer means just being sent to the dean's office or failing a test. This is the real world we're talking about.

Work hard but don't forget to play. Love yourself by learning how to balance your time and your life. Working hard is good but not to the point of burning your-

self out. Life may be a race but everyone needs pit stops once in a while. Don't forget to have fun, adults are allowed that, too.

Handle your money well. Earning your own moolah is a big thrill. And spending it is an even bigger one, especially in a world with iPods and nice shoes and well-stocked malls. But saving a little cash every payday is something you have to do. It may not be fun but the security is worth it.

Create your own adventures. You don't want to grow up too fast. Find pleasure in the small things, seek thrills from your everyday life, create adventures out of nothing. Organization is necessary in every grownup's life, but the occasional spontaneity will do you good.

Make a difference. Find a cause, own it and do what you can for it. The world needs you.

Stay in touch with your friends. There is something important about not forgetting the people who knew you when you still had braces, when you were obsessing over that hot senior, when you were scared to death about getting your class cards. They will keep you young. They will keep you grounded.

Don't stop learning. Say hello to the real world. Now your real education begins.

E-mail the author at ppastor@inquirer.com.ph

Job-hunting 101

From page D1

QUESTIONNAIRE

Here's a rundown of interviewers' usual questions:

- Tell me something about your self
- What do you know about the position/company?
- Why do you want to join this company?
- Why do you want this job?
- What kind of job and position are you looking for?
- Describe your ideal job
- What/who influenced you to choose this career?
- Which subjects did you like best in college? Why?
- How do you think your college experience has prepared you for a career in this field?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- What do you consider to be your greatest achievement?
- Tell me about your worst failure.
- Tell me about a major problem you had to overcome recently
- Where do you see yourself five/10 years from now?
- Are you willing to put in overtime hours and work on holidays?
- What can you do for us that other candidates can't?
- How do you think you can contribute to the company's success?
- Is there any reason for us not to hire you?
- How would you describe yourself in terms of your ability to work as a member of a team? Would you describe yourself as a leader or a follower?
- How do you deal with difficult co-workers/team members?

Your first page should be "I"—it should contain all essential information and your "unique selling point." Make your résumé easy to read; no to artsy fonts or cluttered layouts.

Not all employers expect to find a photo with the résumé. But if you're attaching one anyway, make sure it's a good one. You don't want to be judged based on your photo. It's your credentials that should hold their attention.

The cover letter

A résumé must come with a cover letter. Your cover letter should specify for whom the résumé is, and could detail your knowledge of the company and your interest in the job vacancy. The cover letter could spell the difference between having your résumé read and getting a job interview, and having your résumé dumped in the trash. Don't forget to sign it!

The job interview

A series of good interviews could bag you that job. Interviews can be nerve-racking (terrifying at times, even), so be prepared.

Do:
Arrive early. Come in 15-30 minutes before the scheduled interview. Make a "trial" visit to get a good estimate of traffic and travel time.

Dress professionally (check sidebar). Know the nature of the company's business. Be prepared to discuss the company background, history, its major clients, even competition.

Practice answers to employers' usual questions without sounding like you're delivering a speech. (check sidebar)

Remain calm. Show grace under pressure. And take time to think before answering questions. A well-thought answer is better than a rushed, half-baked one.

Be courteous at all times. Remember your interviewers' names, shake hands

firmly, smile, maintain eye contact, and do not take your seat until offered. Remember to keep your cell phone turned off.

Do not discuss compensation—not just yet. You don't want to sound either overeager or desperate. The employer is just beginning to know you, and what you have to offer.

Bring a pen, a pencil and a notebook. You'll need to jot down information later. The hiring manager might also ask you to fill in some forms.

The interviewer is likely to ask if there's anything you'd like to clarify at the end of the interview. This is the best opportunity for you to ask job expectations (if not yet discussed), and other similar questions that highlight your interest in getting the job.

It's also okay to ask for the next step

How to dress for the job without really trying

What to wear (and what not to wear)

Unless you're seeking employment in an advertising agency or a company known for its ultra-trend culture, it is still better to dress conservatively. Dress to impress! Come in your best corporate attire. This shows professionalism and respect.

For ladies, skirts should not be any shorter than four inches above the knee. Don't wear tops that reveal too much skin (no sleeveless tops or plunging necklines!). Wear conservative low-heeled shoes. Remember: No distracting jewelry like dangling earrings and chunky accessories (that includes your bag). And keep makeup light. Remove nail polish.

For the gents, wear a collared long-sleeved polo with a silk tie, matched with slacks. Wear calf-length socks (not sports socks) and leather shoes (not sneakers or rubber shoes).



(Another job interview? A series of exams?), and when they might arrive at a hiring decision.

Thank the interviewer.

Following up the application

Call on the day you were instructed to by the hiring manager. You will only annoy him/her if you keep calling or sending e-mails.

Don't be disheartened if you don't get a callback immediately. Sometimes, the employment process really takes time.

But do not limit yourself to that one company alone. Continue to send applications to other companies. It's best to have options.

Don't fret if you don't get hired at once. And if you make a few mistakes along the way, just credit it to experience. Practice makes perfect.

Remember this is only a guide, how you go about job-hunting is really up to you. Good luck!

E-mail the author at tri@manila.com.ph

Before employment requirements

- Medical clearance
- SSS number
- TIN number
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THE NEW iMac with...
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Live life inside a Mac

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iLife '06 is where the real fun begins

By Beia Formoso
Contributor

FOR QUITE SOME time, Apple has been referred to as the "other" brand when it comes to computers. Most people think only graphic artists and those with jobs in technology or design use Macs, either that or they're techie geeks.

Regular folks who use computers simply for personal use, such as writing papers, to make PowerPoint projects, e-mail and surf the Internet, just stick to PCs fitted with Microsoft Windows because they've gotten used to the program since it's everywhere. But the truth is Mac computers are not for those with the technical know-how or in creative professions. Quite the contrary, Mac was and still is designed for even the simplest user: the non-techie who wants easy-to-use form and function in a machine but at the same time freedom to create and express herself.

And now that Mac computers have Intel processors, that means you, yes you who have been using a PC for years, can shift to a Mac with the greatest of ease!

Apple CEO Steve Jobs' presentation of the new iMac desktop computer and MacBook Pro laptop with Intel processors at the 22nd Mac World Conference and Expo held last January in San Francisco, California, marked the start of a new era for Mac and for computers in general. It paved the way for universality in computer programs that can now be used in both Mac and PCs. Software that in the past could only be utilized in PCs can now be installed in Mac computers.

Numerous programs that are common in PCs have long been

available in Macs, such as Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, etc.) and Internet applications like Yahoo Messenger. Yet what a lot of people don't know is that because of Mac's exclusivity in using only its own hardware (the computer/laptop unit) for its software, it makes the computer less prone to viruses and other damaging programs, or irritating stuff on the Net like pop-up ads. It also makes it harder to pirate the software and hardware, thereby all that is in the Mac computer is genuine, clean and safe.

"Where do I begin?"

Yet that is just a piece of the whole apple pie (pun intended). Just try to ask a Mac user what he or she likes about the product, you'll get extreme reactions ranging from an instant spewing of features in one breath, mostly in highly technical jargon, to silence, then eventual one-word blubbers in the form of "Basta!"

But in actuality, the fumbling for words or long pauses before

answering is another way of saying "where do I begin?" because there are just so many things to love about Mac computers.

Let's start with the outer appearance. The sleek, pristine shell and keyboard in customary white or silver is the company's trademark, so much so that the form has spilled into its smaller gadgets like the infamous iPod. Apple was also the first to add color to its computer and laptop design with its first iMac and Clamshell iBook series in two-tone themes of candy colors accenting white.

The new computers and laptops, however, have truly outdone themselves when it comes to form.

The MacBook Pro is a silver 15.4-inch-screen laptop while the white iMac desktop computer comes in 17- or 20-inch wide screen flat-panel display. Both come with built-in speakers, microphone, and for the first time ever, iSight, a video camera that allows video conferencing with up

to three people simultaneously.

Other new features include an Apple Remote, a remote control for easy program navigation and project presentation from anywhere in the room (what they call Front Row), and the handy MagSafe Connector. A feature that was highly praised at Mac World, this is a magnetic power adaptor that pulls away from the computer fast and safe so if anyone trips over your power cord, the computer won't go crashing onto the floor.

But like most things in life, it's what's inside that counts. The Mac OS X Tiger operating system organizes your programs and files in a simple, easy-to-use manner that is at the same time a joy to look at with creative icons and graphics. From the lifesaver floater icon signifying the Help program to the silver-wired trash can for deleted items, Mac's icons and commands are fun and user-friendly. It is all laid out there in a minuscule dashboard at the bottom of the screen, and can be moved or taken out to

your liking.

Everything is also so easy to find with the use of a handy magnifying glass icon at the top right-hand corner of the screen, what is called Spotlight because all you have to do is type the first few letters of the document or program you are searching for and in a couple of seconds it has "spotted" all the items pertaining to your inquiry. Whereas in Microsoft, one would have to click on Start at the bottom of the screen, then click on Find in the pop-up menu, type in the whole word or name, then click Search and wait for a few minutes while it searches through the whole computer before any item shows up.

Award-winning lifestyle applications

But what usually steals the show is iLife, which includes Apple's unique programs, namely iTunes, iPhoto, iMovie, iDVD and iWeb. This award-winning suite of digital lifestyle applications has just gotten even

better with the iLife '06 (which comes with every new Mac and is also sold separately).

At the conference, Jobs introduced a brand-new application called iWeb, where you can create an entire personalized website complete with blog entries, photo albums, movies, podcasts and photocasts (more on that later) on the Internet through the Apple website (www.apple.com) in a single click—no configurations or technical hassles.

Also hyped up at Macworld was photocasting, an innovative way to share photos over the Internet directly from within iPhoto via Mac to friends and family.

Photocasting is similar to podcasting but with photos, where anyone can subscribe to your published photo album. Friends or family automatically receive full-quality photos directly in their iPhoto or PC. Yup, your family and friends don't have to be Mac users to view your album online (although perhaps they will be after seeing all you can do with a Mac!).

With all these and more, Apple has thought of everything so that you can create or access anything, including downloading music and television shows in iTunes, to creating and distributing movies with iMovie HD (High Definition) and iDVD.

For hardcore photographers, filmmakers and musicians, there are special extensive programs such as Aperture for photography, Final Cut Pro for filmmaking, and various JamPack programs like Remix Tools and Symphony Orchestra to help you and your art or business reach its fullest potential.

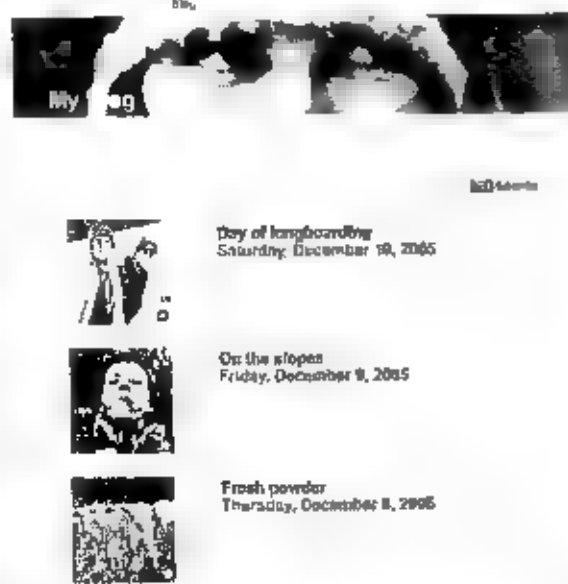
That is truly what sets a Mac computer apart from the rest. It has a personality of its own. It's not just a machine, but an extension of oneself. Apple has built the total package in terms of both hardware and software, keeping in mind appearance but, of course, placing the utmost vitality on what's inside.

And what's inside Mac is now Intel. Here is the spiel from their latest commercial, which played to rousing cheers during Jobs' speech: "The Intel Chip. For years it's been trapped inside PCs. Inside dull little boxes, dutifully performing dull little tasks, when it could have been doing so much more. Starting today, the Intel Chip will be set free and get to live life inside a Mac. Imagine the possibilities."

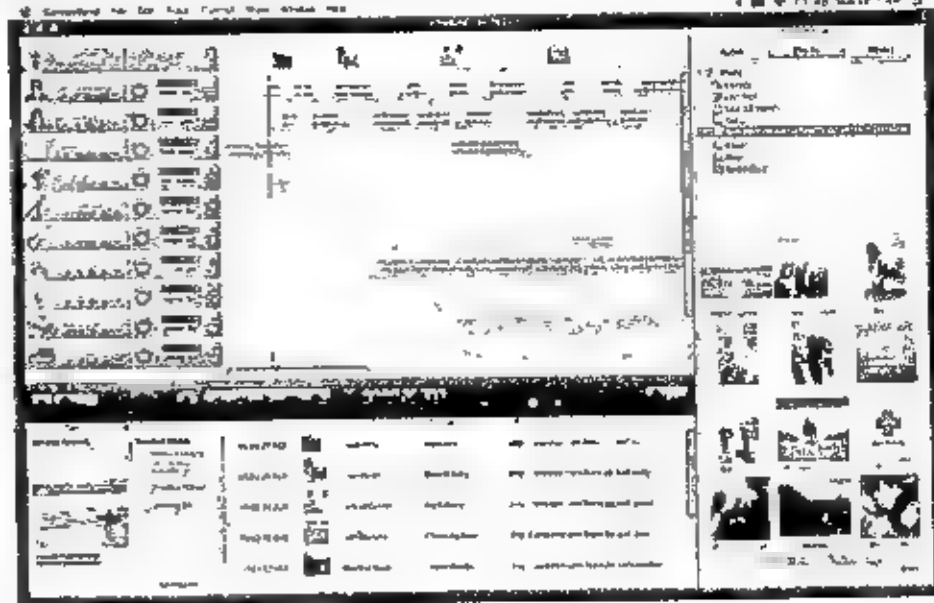
Now you, too, can get to live life inside a Mac. With Apple, there is no easier or more fun way to express yourself at your most creative and share it with the world.

So do what Apple wants you to do: Imagine the possibilities.

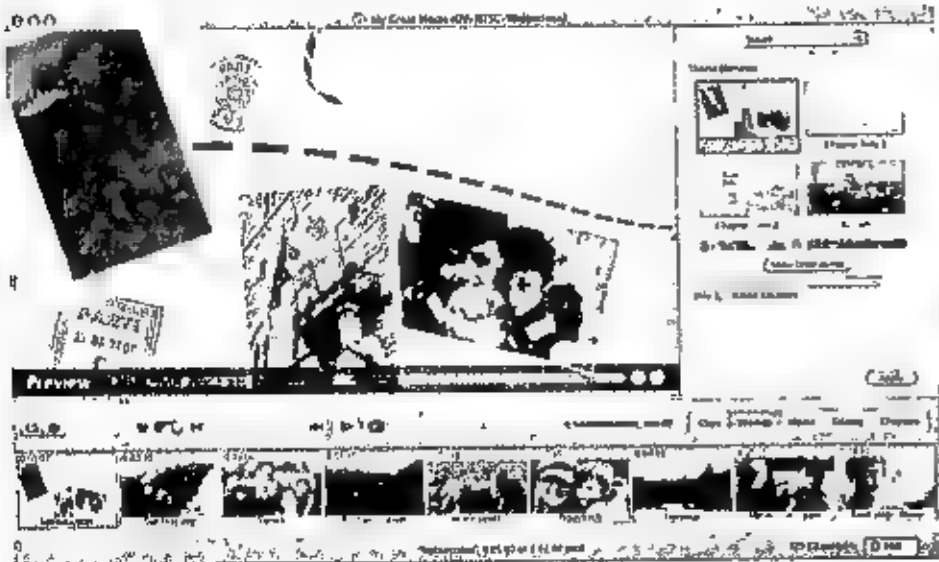
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SONY
Camcorder
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The take on camcorder

Why not capture your birthday party in wide screen and surround sound with the DCR-DVD805?

By Gabriel H. Mercado
2bUI Contributor

IN THE WORLD OF TECH GADGETS, some are as rarely understood as the camcorder segment, due primarily to their prohibitive price, and also because the target market are families.

Hence, camcorders remain rather exclusive. One does not, for example, overhear conversations debating on hard disk versus DVD-based models in jeepneys, whereas ask anyone about cell phones and you will receive compelling arguments about this or that brand.

A brief explanation is therefore in order, and for that I recommend the local Sony website, which does a commendable job segregating the different models, and from which one can glean how other manufacturers market theirs as well.

aesthetics, feature full on PC, stereo and TV connectivity, long battery life and 20x optical zoom, among others at more reasonable prices.

Then there are also the unique ultra-statement models, like tiny units perfect for ladies with bags that can only hold a stick of lipstick and no other, and the enormous professional models with a large mike jutting out, perfect when you want to be mistaken as a terrorist with a rocket launcher. You can avoid these for the most part, unless you have very specific needs and terribly deep pockets.

Still expensive

So what about the DVD805? MiniDV's, while digital, still uses expensive tape and are unwieldy by today's standards. Meanwhile, advancements in small form factor hard disks and DVD recording have come about, and thus finally, we come to discuss the Sony Camcorder DCR DVD805. At P64,999, it's the top-of-the-line, latest DVD Handycam in the market.

DVD camcorders offer direct burning to 8-cm DVDs sans PC, and to answer the Top Two likely questions, yes, you can buy these off of your friendly neighborhood CDR vendor, and, yes, you can play them directly on your P2,000 DVD player.

At 30/60 minutes and a variety of cheap DVD-RWs to choose from, that is video production convenience at an unheard-of scale.

As in record baby's first steps, edit and finalize, then ship it to Papa Jhun in Bahrain in three easy steps-sca.e

The DVD805 comes with Dolby Digital 5.1 sound, a 3.1 mpx still camera, a Carl Zeiss Lens, a memory stick option and a terrific 2.7" touch screen, simplifying use tremendously.

Overall, the DVD805 is a use-straight-out-of-the-box device with intuitive controls for the average to beginning user, highlighting 5.1 channel sound, 16.9 wide screen high-resolution and the convenience of recording on DVD.

I recommend the DVD805 for the quality-conscious family cameraman or even aspiring director, but just to be sure if it's best for you, check out its website for other models.

Staple

Starting at the lower price bracket you will find the 8-mm tape models, still a staple on manufacturer's camcorder menus due to the fact that for a long time there was nothing but 8 mm tapes to record video with.

The aging but functional and affordable medium allows two hours-worth of recording, although its proprietary nature and newer developments are pushing it out. Regardless, those looking for sub P20,000 units might find these appealing—just remember to stock up on tape as these will get harder to find.

Next up is the Digital Video market, of which there are three main segments based on the recording media, namely MiniDV, those using a hard disk and DVDs where our subject the DVD805 lies therein, and which we shall get to in a second.

These segments then branch out into different models depending on the "form factor," or size in layman's terms, which then determines their use.

There are the fashionable one-handed designs that look at home in dressy parties and affairs, decked in chrome and flashy colors at appropriate fashionable prices.

Then there is the standard strapped-in-your-hand camcorder which, unhampered by

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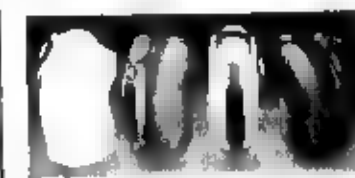
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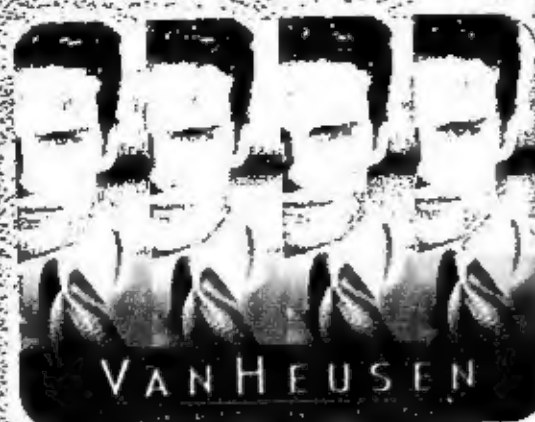
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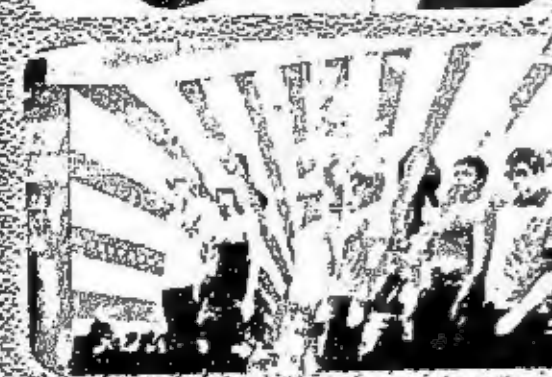
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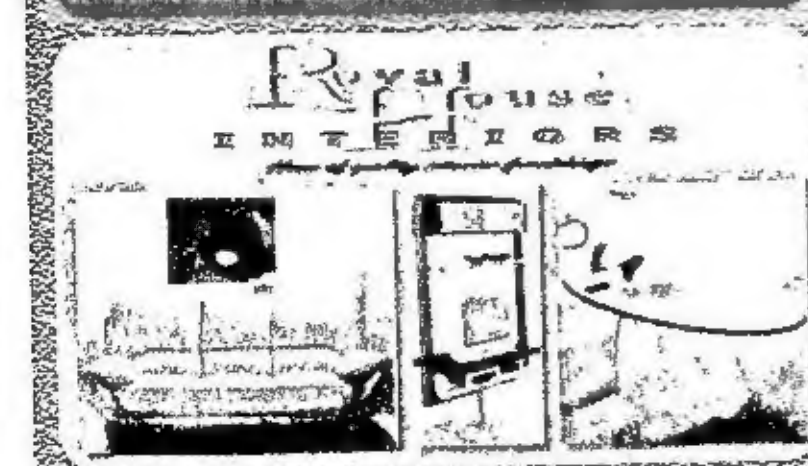


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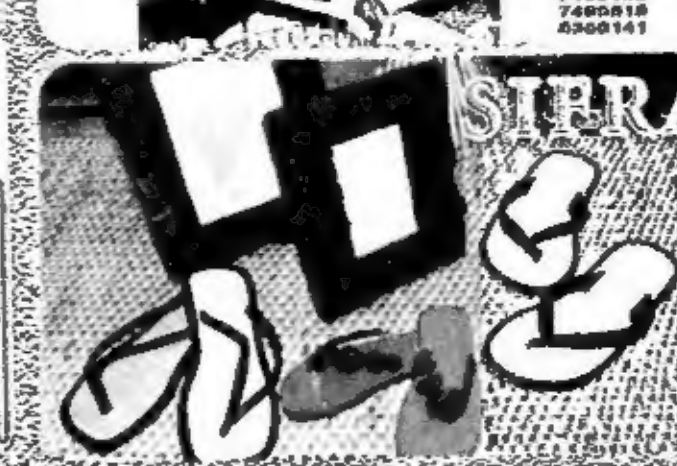
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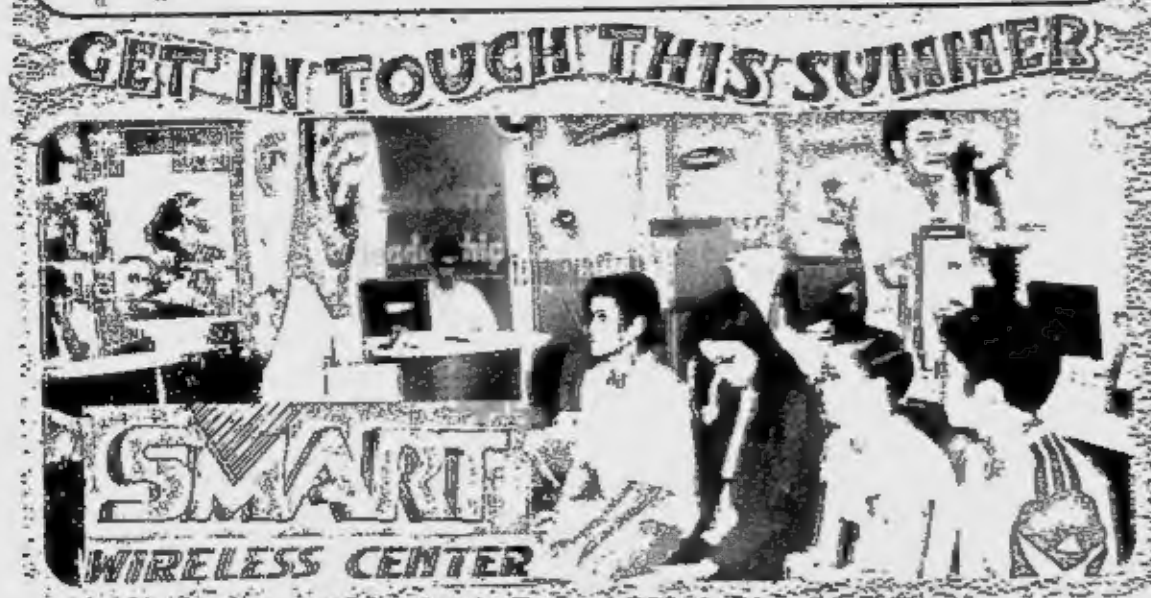
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